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EUCHARISTIC LITURGY
Who Should Preside?

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Blue Collar Blues
PETER DOWNS

Sweet Justice
LINDA DRUCKER

Celebrating Virgil Michel
KAREN SUE SMITH

THIS MAN IS

- ☐ a blasphemer
- ☐ a heretic
- ☐ a nice Catholic boy who grew up to make a movie about Jesus
- ☐ all of the above

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CORRESPONDENCE

Taking up 'fiery prayer'

Berryville, Va.

To the Editors: In your May 20 issue, Lawrence S. Cunningham reviewed two books by Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart* and *The Mystery of Christ*. Cunningham admitted that "both of these books are exemplary volumes for spiritual reading. They attest to a deep faith, a clarity of expression, and a passion to communicate."

However, after having provided a very positive and comprehensive overview of Keating's two books, Cunningham went on to say: ". . . The books are only going to be useful for those who are predisposed toward an intense spiritual life and . . . who have the leisure for its pursuit. Many hypothetical 'persons in the pew' might rightly object that their days do not have the leisure for the two periods of centering prayer."

Thomas Merton, shortly before his death, visited Calcutta where, at a conference on prayer, he expressed well what I would like to convey in this communication:

> You will not believe me when I tell you some of the things that are being said, of people going to a priest in confession, complaining of their inability to pray. The priest says, "Why pray? I don't pray. Why should you? Prayer is irrelevant. Prayer is medieval. It is immaturity. . . . Your action is your prayer and if your action is twenty-four hours a day, your prayer is twenty-four hours a day." This is the life of prayer which is relevant to the world. It is exceedingly dangerous. In America even some Catholic theologians have elected to go along with the popular theology: God is dead. The keynote is "horizontal." God is no longer transcendental. He is nowhere else but purely and simply in my neighbor.

In my ministry of spiritual counseling at our retreat house here at Holy Cross Abbey, I find that these words of Merton [still] reflect the mentality of many of our retreatants. I spend a great part of my time educating the retreatants in a simple method of interior, contemplative prayer. It is precisely Thomas Keating's writings that I recommend. "Centering prayer" is simply a new name for an old art that the Fathers of the Egyptian desert of the fourteenth century called "fiery prayer" (taught or infused by the Holy Spirit) and which in our own milieu has been made known and propagated by the two great classics, *The Cloud of Unknowing* and *The Way of the Pilgrim*.

It is regrettable that so many are hesitant to embark on the journey leading to such a relationship because of the lack of spiritual teachers. Thus it is that we find many of our Christian youth turning to non-Christian traditions with their centuries of teaching on contemplative prayer, when we have sixteen centuries of a rich Christian tradition.

EDWARD McCORKELL

The new rhetoric

St. Louis, Mo.

To the Editors: The rhetorical achievement that marks the U.S. bishops' recent document, *Economic Justice for All*, is every bit as noteworthy as Francis DeBernardo maintains ["Engaging Words," June 3]. Understood comprehensively, rhetoric governs all of the complex relationships of speaker, audience, and subject that mark any given discourse. In the past, American Catholic bishops had developed no rhetoric that would enable them to speak effectively about matters of moral or doctrinal concern, or indeed about anything else, to the general American public as well as to Catholic communicants. They could speak to the Catholic faithful. Others could only overhear, and perhaps misunderstand, what the bishops had to say.

One of the American bishops' many great achievements over the past few years has been their development of a voice capable of addressing the entire American populace, in ways which are truly Catholic and evangelistic but not exclusivist. The bishops have created a new rhetoric, finding for themselves a public audience which includes the Catholic faithful and others as well, and adjusting accordingly their own style and tone of address and their approach to subjects of concern. This is a major apostolic achievement. It brings the gospel into contact with the real world as never before, I believe, in the history of the church. And it does so at a time when the inescapable openness of the media makes the development of this inclusive rhetoric imperative. To operate with the old style rhetoric would be evangelical suicide for the Catholic church. The new rhetoric is evidence of the way the church is living and growing today.

WALTER J. ONG, S.J.
St. Louis University

(Continued on page 478)

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters should not exceed 250 words and are subject to editing for clarity and space limitations.

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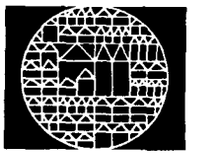

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The planet speaks

It has been a long, odd summer. For one thing, peace seems to be breaking out in places where it seemed that war would go on forever. The cease-fire between Iran and Iraq is most welcome. The Soviets continue their withdrawal from Afghanistan—and odds are their puppet government will not be far behind. The United States has ceased its funding of the *contras*, although the Sandinistas continue to act as a government besieged.

Surprises and ironies continue in the Eastern bloc. The conference of the Soviet Communist party in June and July exposed a watching world to the sometimes awkward, sometimes conflicting efforts of Soviet leaders to deal with their new political agenda. At the same time, in Czechoslovakia— invaded twenty years ago this past August by the Russians; in Poland—where Solidarity is once again asserting itself in a leadership role; and in East Germany—where *perestroika* gets a cold shoulder, there are shockingly few signs of adaptive responses to the new possibilities. And the Sandinistas seem hell bent on centralization of the means of production while the performance of the Eastern bloc all but certifies that it can't work.

In the United States we have two presidential and two vice-presidential candidates, which is about right for an election year. Our early assessment is that essential issues will be ignored in favor of trivial ones.

But the oddity of the summer rests not so much on human affairs directly as on the confluence of so many ecological afflictions. "The planet is telling us we can't treat it this way any more," was the assessment of Dr. Stephen Joseph, New York City's health commissioner, as he closed the beaches and tried to deal with the illegally discarded syringes, vials of contaminated blood, and other medical debris that washed in with the tide. Europe's beaches, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, too, showed the shortsightedness of using oceans as garbage dumps.

Of course, the loss of summer tans and ocean swims is a minor affliction compared to the drought conditions that stalked much of the Midwest, ruining thousands of acres of crops. Similar conditions prevailed in the other great breadbaskets: Canada, China, the Soviet Union. Drought conditions destroy not just food and livestock but the land itself. The images of the great dust bowl that we associate with photos from the 1930s are reappearing in areas where topsoil is thin and easily blown away.

Scientists seem ready to consider the possibility that this summer's intense and persistent heat reflects the long-term warming pattern associated with the greenhouse effect—the cumulative result of burning fossil fuels. The particles and chemical residues, especially carbon dioxide, gather in the upper atmosphere trapping warm air, which, over time, scientists think is not only raising temperatures but distorting normal weather patterns. Drought and desertification are one out-

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come; so are flooding and the distortion of delicate ecological balances.

As the weather cools, and air conditioners are turned off; as we climb out of cars and walk off airplanes from vacations that helped some of us escape the heat, there is the all-too-human tendency to think that this confluence was a coincidence: This year's drought will be offset by next year's floods.

But, if the planet is talking back to us, some serious and sustained listening is called for. The first response of concerned individuals—buying fuel-efficient cars, cutting back on summer air conditioning and winter heating—is essential but insufficient. Voluntarism plus peer pressure can indeed bring change, and sometimes with surprising speed. But rescuing the environment from the follies of *homo sapiens* will require wrenching changes in the way we live along with the resolution of deep-seated conflicts among opposing interests—commercial, regional, international.

The waters flow, the winds blow without regard for distance or boundaries. Pesticides applied in California are consumed in Dallas and Peoria. Soil-ravaging practices used in Iowa impoverish the nation. The list of ecological disasters-in-the-making (or already here) is long, and most proposed remedies are intricate, hugely expensive, politically difficult. The 1987 Montreal treaty to protect the earth's ozone layer is a promising (if modest) signal that global consciousness can be raised and international cooperation can be achieved. But a great deal more is needed, at local, regional, and national levels. Nature is now talking; soon she may howl.

FAINTHEARTEDNESS

Last January, four federal contracts worth $22.6 million over six years were awarded to researchers working on the artificial heart. On September 30 these contracts were scheduled for suspension, at the recommendation of Dr. Claude Lenfant, director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. During July, however, two months before the suspension was to take effect, Lenfant's decision was reversed and the contracts reinstated.

What happened? The politics of heart research won out over sound, long-term priority setting in health-care research.

Last spring Lenfant told the National Institutes of Health (N.I.H.) advisory council on heart research that the artificial heart projects were progressing poorly and slowly, would take at least a decade to complete, and would benefit only a few patients at enormous expense. Meanwhile, a breakthrough was at hand with a simpler device, which—given the institute's finite budget—deserved funding priority. A left-ventricle pump to assist a patient's own heart could help thousands within three years, and patient experience with the pump might provide data to advance future artificial heart research.

With memories of Barney Clark and the four other recipients of an artificial heart—none of whom survived — still in mind, as well as the millions spent on artificial heart research so far, the council supported Lenfant's choice. Several noted heart surgeons vowed to continue artificial heart research with private funds.

Congress, however, pressured the institute to reverse its decision, a move which would have been less objectionable had medical reasons been the cause. Instead, pure pork barrel politics prompted the action. The two senior members of the N.I.H. allocations committee represent two of the four states awarded artificial heart contracts. Senators Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass) and Orrin G. Hatch (R-Ut) simply threatened the N.I.H. with legislation making funds for any new projects contingent on the continuation of current contracts—such as the artificial heart. The N.I.H. couldn't risk having all new projects stifled. So, by holding the purse strings, Congress forced N.I.H. to line the pockets of contractors in a few states, and to cut the research budget of a project promising rapid and less costly public-health benefits.

The move was not without precedent. In 1963, influenced by Dr. Michael E. DeBakey of Baylor Medical School, Congress pressured N.I.H. director, Dr. James Shannon, despite his objections, to take up the artificial heart project in the first place.

Health-care costs cry out for careful long-range planning and priority setting. Congress ought to take the lead in funding programs dedicated to such aims. Lenfant's decision to favor the heart pump research was based on exemplary reasoning: providing the best medicine for the most patients in the least amount of time. It should have been applauded not overturned.

CANTERBURY TALES

Within the walls of the town of Canterbury there is one Roman Catholic church, Saint Thomas of Canterbury. On Sunday, July 31, the congregation prayed for the success of the Lambeth Conference going on up the hill at the University of Kent. The Lambeth Conference is the decennial gathering of the bishops of the Anglican Communion, the churches that have grown from the Church of England.

Were the prayers of the Roman Catholics at St. Thomas's answered? Many among the 500 Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference may have been grateful for them and some even a bit desirous of the authoritativeness of Rome. Lacking the centralized authority of Roman Catholicism, the Anglican Communion must struggle with the increasing diversity of practice among its member churches. The big issue at the 1988 conference was the imminent consecration of women bishops by the Episcopal church in the United States and in those Anglican Communion churches, Canada and New Zealand, that also ordain women.

The conference was preceded by threats of schism and "impaired communion" among Anglicans and fears that con-

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secrating women as bishops would impede further efforts at unity with Rome and the Eastern Orthodox churches. There were other divisive issues, including reconsideration of the 1888 conference's condemnation of polygamy, relations with non-Christian religions, and the morality of armed struggle. Anglicans are the first to criticize and even poke fun at their predilection for compromise and accommodation. Clifford Longley of the *London Times* called it "the least fanatical of religions, hence one of the most civilized." Bishop William Frey of Colorado was referring to this same quality, perhaps more wryly, when he observed "no one, not even the Ayatollah Khomeini, can be absolutely certain that he might not inadvertently be an Anglican."

This relaxed sense of definition and boundaries would disorient many Roman Catholics, and some Anglicans are uneasy with it. And yet, it is hard not to see, for example, in the bishops' vote to respect the decisions of those provinces that will ordain women bishops, and to appoint a commission to discuss the problems that arise, a certain kind of religious humility in the face of new and sometimes wrenching choices.

And in that spirit the Anglican debates over authority are worthwhile for Catholics to reflect on in two ways. The absence of a central authority requires that the bishops must act in a collegial spirit consulting with one another and with their people. Perhaps that leaves some issues, such as ordaining women priests and consecrating them bishops, in a provisional state, but it also means that novel practices can be tried, evaluated, and, in the opinion of critics, (perhaps) found wanting. Rather than an impediment to communion, this may be a real service to Anglicans as well as to Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. Second, having no central authority either to acquiesce in or rebel against, Anglicans must proceed by persuasion and example, and many point to the way in which the Oxford Movement worked a change in Anglicanism by this means. The Anglican notion of authority may not be perfect. That Anglicans are the first to say so is refreshing and exemplary.

LABOR RELATIONS

DRUDGERY AT WENTZVILLE

THE TEAM CONCEPT STRIKES OUT

One of the most striking features of the bishops' letter, *Economic Justice for All*, is its emphasis on human dignity. The bishops call attention not only to what we produce, but to the effects that our forms of work and styles of trade have on the people involved in them.

Talk is cheap, however, and "dignity" is one of those things that is easy to feel, but hard to measure. It seems now everyone is concerned with the dignity of people at work. Not a week goes by when I don't see an article in the business pages of a magazine or a newspaper stating that as the relationship between labor and management improves and both sides treat each other with respect, productivity gains.

Unions, of course, have been concerned about the dignity of work for over a hundred years. Several of today's programs for bolstering the dignity of work by increasing workers' involvement in their workplace began as union proposals in the early 1970s, when everyone was concerned about "blue collar blues." Many unions, including my own, the UAW, see the adoption of these programs and the discussion about dignity at work as a great advance for their members. I think they're wrong.

I work at an auto assembly plant in Wentzville, Missouri. The plant opened in 1984 with what was billed as a new form of work organization: the team concept. The official philosophy of the team concept was that "informed people working together with mutual trust and respect will create an environment that encourages support, participation, pride, craftsmanship, and personal development."

Besides treating workers with "dignity and respect," management at Wentzville and other GM plants agreed to UAW proposals for job rotation, worker participation in designing plants and jobs, and the involvement of workers in both quality control and cost reduction. The newer plants are even air-conditioned, like offices.

Initially, many workers at Wentzville were enthusiastic about the team concept. Team coordinator Ken Wigger, for example, who had worked in steel mills and chemical plants before starting at GM-Wentzville in 1985, said, "They told us up-front that they would be using our brains and not just our brawn, that what we said would mean something. . . . I was so very impressed . . . that I actually shed tears. I was convinced that the team concept was the answer to our national economic and industrial ills, because the ideas and efforts of each individual worker would be sought out and appreciated."

The results, however, have not been what reformers had hoped for. Boredom and alienation remain endemic at Wentzville. According to Jim May, attendance coordinator at the plant, alcohol and drugs are still popular escape mechanisms. Absenteeism, though lower than in the 1970s, remains high compared to the 1950s and early 1960s. Job rotation hasn't changed the situation. Being able to do six monotonous jobs is no more fulfilling than being able to do one. At Wentzville, most workers prefer to stay on one job because it is easier to daydream or talk with their neighbors if they stay on the same job than it is to do those things while trying to adjust to the rhythm of a different job every week or so. Indeed, thinking makes work on the assembly line harder. It gets in the way of the rhythm.

According to management, one of the objects of the team system is to motivate workers to "do the job right the first time," what is called "doing it right in station." For the engineer that means designing the job so that it is impossible for the worker to make a mistake, whether the worker is paying attention or not; to design the task so that eventually a robot can

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do it. Despite all the rhetoric about dignity and respect, management wants the job designed for brainless zombies.

Other avenues for worker involvement have not enhanced the workers' real participation. By definition, the problems of quality control and cost reduction remain entirely up to management. Quality, defined as "performing the operation according to specifications," is not the same as performance, appearance, and comfort to a customer. It really means following orders. Workers are invited to think of ways to carry out orders with fewer deviations. In other words, can you think of a way to make your job even more monotonous by making it impossible to make a mistake? Workers did help plan the layout of the assembly line. But how many times in a generation does that happen? Once it's built, it's built.

Ken Wigger now says that the team concept was management's way of weakening the union. If anything has changed, it is that there is now more cynicism and apathy about the union than before. There is a type of respectful disrespect that even shows up in the employee handbook. Individual responsibilities listed in the handbook include such things as "be safe; be a good housekeeper; be dependable; take pride in your work; show enthusiasm; learn to listen actively; keep fit; and be courteous." Management's responsibilities, on the other hand, are "to improve the quality of work life of our employees; to manage the business so that human and capital resources are effectively utilized; invest in new products, plants, and equipment; and make a fair return to our stockholders on their investment." It seems to be written from the point of view that workers are drudges, and they have to be told how to be good drudges so that they can be happy drudges. As a worker, all I can say is "Gee, thanks."

Which is not to say that workers are not involved in managerial decisions. At Wentzville, each team is assigned a budget and asked to think of ways of cutting its costs. The choices are limited. Either the team replaces tools, such as drill bits and screwdriver tips, less often, and uses fewer safety supplies, such as gloves; or it rejects fewer parts for defects. In short, the choice is whether the team compromises quality or safety. We're dealing with major decisions here.

GM and the UAW have even come up with a way to let local unions have a say on what products a plant will make and at what cost. GM decides the products it is going to make, and local unions can bid against each other for a particular car model or product. The locals compete with one another to cut costs by, for example, eliminating jobs. If management decides to "outsource" a part or product, the local union gets a chance to figure out how to produce the part for less than the outside supplier. At Wentzville, the local union also got the right to send four workers, out of six thousand, to Detroit to help design the production process for a new model the plant is supposed to start producing in two years. That is "worker involvement" on a grand scale!

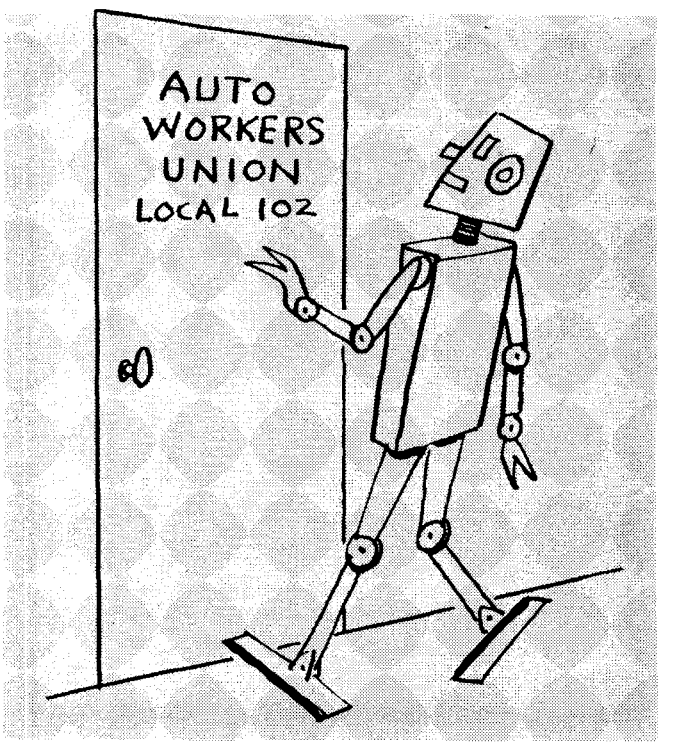
The flaw in the UAW's project for humanizing the workplace is a simple one: it left management holding all the cards. Management defines every problem so that workers cannot participate on the basis of what is good for society, for their community, or even for themselves. They can only participate on the basis of what is good for the company. Management makes all the important decisions, and workers decide how best to live with them.

That's not too surprising, however, because from the beginning of its humanizing efforts, the UAW accepted that the companies had the right to make as much money as they could, provided only that the workers got a "fair share." The object of participative management never was to challenge any of the companies' most basic decisions or operating principles. The assumption was that workers' material needs were taken care of and all that was needed was to find a way to make them happy being part of a company that was ripping off the world in a drive for higher profits.

It is the imperative to maximize profits, however, which is at the root of workers' alienation. It is the drive to maximize profits which is responsible for speed-up, the monotony of the work, and the pressure from supervisors to cut back on safety supplies and to work during breaks. By failing to challenge that drive, unions campaigning for workplace democracy can obtain little more than tokenism.

No one starts to work in an auto plant expecting to stay there. That is the same today as it was twenty or forty years ago. Many workers who stay develop "outside interests," which are more important to them than the auto plant. They own liquor stores or carwashes, or operate one-person cabinetry workshops, farms, or serve as construction contractors. Those are the things through which workers achieve satisfaction or "success."

Auto workers don't want the factory to be their life. The sooner union officials admit that, the better. Obtaining a shorter workweek with no loss of pay will do more for assembly



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workers' dignity than any scheme for "participative management." It will do more for the unemployed too, since it will create more jobs.

PETER DOWNS

Peter Downs, an assembly line worker for General Motors, is recording secretary for UAW Local 2250.

VERDICT FROM SAN JOSE

SWEET JUSTICE

DECIDING FOR THE DISAPPEARED

For the family of Manfredo Velasquez, justice came neither too easily nor too soon. Velasquez was an elementary school teacher and graduate student in economics when he was kidnapped in a parking lot by plainclothes Honduran army agents in September, 1981. Then thirty-five years old, with a wife and small child, Velasquez was never seen alive again. He was one of some 150 Hondurans suspected by their government of involvement in leftist activities who "disappeared" between 1981 and 1984. At that time Honduras was controlled by a U.S.-backed military strongman, Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, known for his fanatical, almost messianic anticommunism and vociferous support of the *contras*.

Velasquez's younger sister, Zenaida, refused to let her brother's memory die. She traveled from one army garrison to another, asking for information on her brother's whereabouts. When that failed, she hired lawyers to file habeas corpus petitions seeking his release.

For what she describes as "seven long years," well after she had given up her own brother for dead, Zenaida Velasquez struggled to prevent the Honduran public from forgetting about the *desaparecidos*. She organized the ragtag army of girlfriends, mothers, and wives of the disappeared into a cohesive organization that marched in front of the Honduran chamber of deputies, waving photos of their missing loved ones. Fired from her government job as a social worker, she herself was detained and questioned by Honduran authorities on several occasions. Early this year, fearing for her life in the wake of the assassination of a fellow human rights activist, she left Honduras for the United States.

Justice was particularly sweet for the Velasquez family when it came on July 29, 1988 in the form of an unprecedented ruling from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

The court, which is the judicial arm of the Organization of American States (OAS), found the Honduran government guilty in the kidnapping and disappearance of Manfredo Velasquez and ordered it to pay money damages to Velasquez's family. (The amount of the damages is to be negotiated between the government and the family under the court's supervision.) The court also held that there is sufficient evidence to prove that members of the Honduran armed forces engaged in a systematic practice of "disappearing" political opponents between 1981 and 1984. Three other cases involving disappearances that took place in Honduras are still pending.

The Velasquez case is significant because it is the first time an international tribunal has judged a Latin American government guilty of death squad killings. The only other cases to date have involved prosecutions brought by a government against its own military officers in domestic courts. Domestic prosecution is likely to result in acquittals because of the enormous political influence of the military and because of domestic "state of siege" laws. These laws allow governments to practice mass detention without charges, and other suspensions of constitutional guarantees, which may provide a defense for human rights violators. In contrast, the international law applied by the Inter-American Court considers such practices *per se* violations of human rights.

Housed in a stately marble edifice in a residential neighborhood in San Jose, Costa Rica, the Inter-American Court was established by the OAS in 1979 to enforce the American Convention of Human Rights. The Convention, signed by sixteen American countries, still has not been ratified by the United States. The court's seven justices—six Latins and one American—are prominent judges or law professors in their respective countries. The U.S. justice is German-born Emory University law professor Thomas Buergenthal, who has had his own first-hand experience with oppression. At age ten he was one of the youngest survivors at Auschwitz. One of the court's major advantages is that the judges do not represent their governments, only their individual consciences.

Before hearing the Honduran case, the court's role had been limited to interpreting the human rights convention for member states—if and when they asked for clarification. In 1985, for example, at the request of Costa Rica, the court issued an advisory opinion, holding that Costa Rica's system of requiring journalists to obtain government licenses before they could practice their profession violated the Convention's guarantee of freedom of expression.

The Velasquez case against Honduras is the first time the court has presided over an adversarial courtroom proceeding which involved live testimony, from some eighteen witnesses, over an eight-month period of hearings and deliberations. While the hundred-odd disappearances that occurred in Honduras were far fewer than the thousands that took place in Argentina and El Salvador, charges were leveled against Honduras because it is one of only a handful of countries in the hemisphere that have formally accepted the jurisdiction of the Inter-American Court. The U.S. is one of those governments that have declined to accept the court's jurisdiction. So far, ten governments have acceded to the court's jurisdiction, but most have also signed reservations prohibiting the prosecution of violations that occurred before they signed the human rights convention.

In the Honduran case, the prosecution was able to marshal unusually strong evidence of military participation in the death squads. The star witness was a Honduran military defector,

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Florencion Caballero, who admitted participating in the kidnapping and described in graphic detail the inner workings of a clandestine death squad unit, known as "Battalion 316," established by the Honduran military. The court heard the dramatic account of a young law school graduate, Ines Murillo, who was imprisoned in a secret jail where she was tortured and sexually abused for seventy-nine days. She was released by the same Honduran authorities, who, throughout her captivity, repeatedly denied having any knowledge of her whereabouts.

The court also heard from the relatives of the missing, from attorneys who had filed habeas corpus petitions on their behalf, and from human rights activists and congressmen who had conducted investigations into the disappearances. The witnesses painted a picture of a government whose judiciary was incapable of preventing, investigating, or punishing human rights abuses by the military. As one attorney testified, only partly exaggerating, "The only thing that happened when an attorney filed a petition on behalf of a *desaparecido* was that the attorney himself disappeared."

The Honduran government's position was hardly helped by the fact that while the court was still hearing evidence, two prosecution witnesses were brutally gunned down, one of them after having received a black tie in the mail with a note advising him to wear it to his funeral.

Human rights activists believe the verdict in the Velasquez case will not only set a precedent for the bringing of future charges against other Latin American regimes, but will also help to depoliticize the human rights issue—which some Latin governments have historically considered to be a pretext used by leftist and Marxist groups to mobilize antigovernment support.

Governments will no longer be able to dismiss charges of human rights abuses as propaganda by the opposition. The opposition will no longer be able to claim that there is no tribunal sufficiently impartial to pass judgment on the accuracy of its charges.

The Honduran government has said it will respect the ruling, although it has denied that it is admitting guilt by paying damages. Moreover, the government took pains to point out that the disappearances occurred in 1981 under a different government. What it did not say is that the military officers, named by witnesses as the commanders of the battalion that operated the death squads, still occupy influential positions in the Honduran military and, in some cases, have been promoted.

While some fear that few new governments will accede to the court's jurisdiction now that there seem to be real teeth in the court's enforcement powers, the verdict represents the coming of age of the Inter-American Court. The court has demonstrated that it can conduct an impartial trial and command respect for its verdict.

LINDA DRUCKER

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THE MAN FROM COLLEGEVILLE

MICHEL BLOWS HIS HORN

SOCIAL JUSTICE & THE LITURGY

In 1938, a forty-eight-year-old Benedictine philosopher-monk named Virgil Michel died unexpectedly. *Commonweal*'s obituary referred to him as "a strong, iron little man, full of initiative . . . afraid of no labor," who "got an incredible lot of work done...."

This year, the fiftieth anniversary of his death, Catholics are celebrating Michel's considerable legacy: a body of ideas and penchant for organization that launched the liturgical reform movement in the U.S.; the Liturgical Press; *Orate Fratres* magazine (now called *Worship*); and new methods of religious education.

In *Commonweal*, Michel's articles—on labor, capitalism, agriculture, the common good—appeared alongside those of Willa Cather, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Msgr. John A. Ryan, Fulton Sheen, and Michel's correspondents, Mortimer Adler and Donald Attwater. Michel once wrote to a friend that he was to "take part in a symposium at Notre Dame with some big bugs including Maritain and Gilson."

What troubled Michel was the devastation wrought by industrial society. How might this society be transformed in

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accord with Christian values? Michel, the social analyst, found unconstrained individualism and a complacent bourgeois spirit at the root of our social ills. As a remedy, he proposed: "a reconstruction in the direction of human solidarity...and a full reawakening of the Christian habits of sacrifice, simplicity of life, and charity." Michel saw the Depression as judgment upon capitalism, and—perhaps uniquely—he saw that liturgy provided an instrument of social reform, and the church a model of human community.

The Mass itself, Michel believed, could counteract the destructiveness of individualism by its communal banquet, its transcendence of class barriers in admitting all equally to the celebration, its eucharistic ministry to the sick, its prayers that those in positions of worldly power would act justly, its collections of money and goods for the needy, its biblical injunctions to live in solidarity with the poor, and its warnings against a materialistic lifestyle. But Michel also saw that to accomplish these, the liturgy had to be reformed. It would have to expel clericalism and promote active lay participation, symbolize an authentic community, and inspire service to the world at large.

Today, one can find in Michel's writings striking similarities with the bishops' pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*. About poverty, Michel wrote: "If individuals do not attain the good life through their own negligence, then society must still come to the rescue of any who suffer innocently from such negligence...; and if the negligent become a menace to the common good of all, then society must defend itself...from their negligence."

Two commemorative books have been published by the Liturgical Press. *Virgil Michel, American Catholic* by R.W. Franklin and Robert L. Spaeth, a brief, informative, and engaging book, suggests that society today stands in need of the type of moral analysis Michel engaged in. *The Social Question: Essays on Capitalism and Christianity*, edited by Spaeth, is a selection of Michel's essays. Also, the May issue of *Worship* is devoted to Michel's work.

In July, liturgists and social activists met together for the Virgil Michel Symposium at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota—Michel's former home—to explore the undeveloped but vital link between social justice and liturgy. The monk described as "out front in alertness" is still leading Catholics to reform.

KAREN SUE SMITH

Karen Sue Smith is an associate editor of Commonweal *and the director of the Iona Center for Pastoral Liturgy at Iona College, New Rochelle, New York.*

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

DEFINING SIN

SEXISM: SIMPLE & CONCRETE

It came as no surprise when the bishops at their Collegeville meeting sent the first draft of their letter on women's concerns back to the ad hoc committee with a request for further elucidation of the sin of sexism. This was not necessarily in response to the angry fundamentalists who charged that the bishops had invented a new sin. Sympathetic and scholarly commentators had faulted the discussion of sexism as well. The critique of the Jesuit-founded Center of Concern stated flatly: "The draft document lacks a structural analysis of the sin of sexism."

The thoughtful theological analysis must surely be made, but I am concerned that the sin as a gross form of injustice destructive of human dignity and personhood be spelled out in such simple and concrete terms that no Catholic can escape it in examining his or her conscience in the old-fashioned way. There are, I am sure, among the bishops, as there are among the laity, those to whom words like racism and sexism sound manufactured, words with no resonance in the morality with which their consciences were formed. That resonance, that almost instinctive conviction of wrong, must be established.

Studies show that over the past thirty years there has been a growing acknowledgment of the sin of racism. But sexism is still essentially a new word in familiar use only in restricted circles. Less than twenty years ago when I attended a World Council of Churches' conference on "Sexism in the '70s" it was reported in many European papers as a conference on "Sex after 70." Both the word "sexism" and the concept were alien to the journalists, sophisticated as they were. They are both still alien to many, if not most, Catholics today. Yet sexism is rife in the bishops' world and ours. And commonplace.

This past Sunday I heard a young priest deliver a homily during which he asked for donations to a seminary in the Philippines. In the course of it he experienced a slight lapse of memory. He snapped his fingers and appealed to the front pews for help. "After Marcos left, what's the name of the gal who took over? Aquino, that's it? I'm bad at names. Well, it seems after that the currency was devalued." It was not clear that the "gal" was responsible for the parlous state of the currency but the patronizing attitude toward any "gal" taking over anything was palpable.

There was, of course, none of the faint hissing I heard when I shared a platform with a puzzled congressman who congratulated a woman's college faculty on the fine crop of "girls" they were graduating, "girls soon to become wives and mothers." Nor do I remember any expression of disapproval when a speaker, a lay leader, assured a meeting of the laity that his wife and daughters were not concerned with discrimination in the work place since they wanted no career

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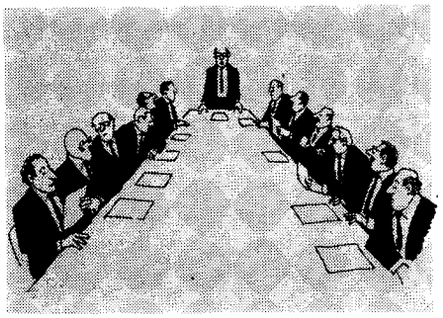

"The committee on women's rights will now come to order."

other than the time-honored traditional one—oh, a murmur, an exchange of glances, perhaps, but nothing positive. The priest, the congressman, the lay leader, may not be aware that they practice the sin of sexism. And not much of an effort has been made to enlighten them.

In such an atmosphere what has been cited as a weakness in the letter—the defining of sexism in terms of personal sin—may well be primary to deeper analysis. There *is* a call to self-examination in identifying sexism as a moral and social evil expressed in attitudes, dispositions, or patterns of behavior that presuppose the superiority of the male and male dominance as the norm. Sexism is certainly a social sin, and a sin of structures, but it is important that those guilty of it feel personally responsible. To see it as part and parcel of a flawed society is to invite the shrug, the smile of complicity, the acceptance of "that's the way it is." A great deal more specificity and concrete example defining and illustrating sexism is needed either in the letter itself or in an accompanying study guide to make its teaching comprehensible, effective, and conscience-forming.

True, the bishops have mentioned some of the controversial aspects of sexism in the church which have been identified by women—ordination, preaching, teaching and studying in seminaries, decision making, the participation of women in discussions of reproduction, and so forth. They have condemned the abuse of women and rape and pornography—all evils highlighted by the women's movement long ago—but both the mention and the condemnation are couched in general terms. I would like to see an expression of contrition for past or present practices in practical terms which might be suggestive to the diocesan functionary, the assistant pastor, the Catholic policeman or lawyer in the future.

The letter speaks, for example, of "the anguish of women who have wide-ranging spiritual and intellectual gifts that could be of service to the church, but who are not afforded the chance to use them." What of the women who *were* allowed to use these gifts in one restricted area of service—the education of the parochial students the clerics did not care to teach and the secondary and higher education of women excluded from church academies and universities? What of their anguish at seeing the fine institutions they developed sacrificed by diocesan planners and tuition-hungry male institutions belatedly recruiting women students? Their situation and the reasons for it provide fine illustrations of sexism at work.

I have on my desk clippings telling of the closing of two outstanding institutions founded by Catholic women. In both cases the blithe assumption that the welfare of a neighboring men's institution took priority over the welfare of the women's institution was at the root of the closing. An eighty-one-year-old college of high academic standing was first undercut when its neighbor institution went coeducational without warning and began to recruit its traditional students. The *coup de grace* was administered when the two discussed a merger and the men's institution rejected it at the last moment. In the other case a fifty-two-year-old academy which had reached out to minority students found itself foundering when a neighboring men's high school was encouraged by the archdiocese to expand and become coeducational. (Ten years ago significant research proved that graduates of women's institutions had higher self-images and were higher achievers than women from coeducational schools. Recent research has reaffirmed that finding. In none of the cases of women's schools closing have church authorities adverted to that fact. What is best for women is hardly the issue, it seems.)

These and like cases are instances of the way in which sexism does far-reaching and permanent harm. They are also instances difficult to express contrition for, hard to acknowledge, and unfortunately rather easy to describe as beside the point. Sexism is hydra-headed and indeed difficult to define. But we are on the way. Let us hope there is no drawing back. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

FOR THE 'L' OF IT

MADE IN THE U.S.A.

One of the most astonishing terminological developments in the politics of our time is that "liberal" has become a dirty word—"the L word," as President Reagan calls it.

"How dirty is it?" you may ask. Well, the heart and soul of the Bush-for-president campaign is the effort to pin the "liberal" label on Michael Dukakis. And no small part of the Dukakis campaign is to run away from this poisonous label. That was the point behind the snub given to the Democratic party's most conspicuous liberal, Jesse Jackson, when Dukakis failed to make the courtesy phone call to him while naming a vice-presidential candidate; and, of course, it was a large part of the point (the other part being the Texas votes in the electoral college) behind nominating Lloyd Bentsen, a person whose nonliberal credentials are universally believed to

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be in impeccable order, for vice-president.

So it's dirty, all right, really dirty.

Which is very odd, when you think about it, since the entire history of the United States is little other than the history of the growth and development of American liberalism. "Liberalism" is not a word which means, à la Humpty Dumpty, anything you want it to mean. It is a word with a vast amount of historical content, a word whose meaning has been supplied and defined by the last couple of centuries of social, political, and economic experience. Liberalism involves such taken-for-granted elements of American life as democratic elections, a largely private enterprise economy, a strong but limited state, equal protection of the law, freedom of speech and press, separation of church and state, a high value placed on the individual and the rights of the individual.

If "liberal" is now a dirty word, does this mean Americans are turning against these liberal values and institutions? Of course not. For to repudiate all this would be to repudiate the United States itself. In America we are all liberals, both those of us who, like Michael Dukakis, used to call ourselves liberals before we became embarrassed by the word, and those of us who call ourselves conservatives.

So how come, if this is such a 100 percent liberal society, "liberalism" has got weighted down with immense dyslogistic connotations?

Part of the answer has to do with American religion, in particular American Protestantism. The great divide in religion in this country used to be that between Catholics and Protestants. But as Catholicism modernized itself at Vatican II and as Catholics in the United States became fully Americanized, the old animosities faded. Nowadays the great religious divide is found within Protestantism itself—between the liberal (or mainline) denominations and the conservative (evangelical and pentecostal) denominations.

In the eyes of the conservative American Protestant, liberal Christianity has long been a suspicious character. In fact it has been viewed as a downright contradiction in terms. As the conservative sees it, liberal Christianity—with its accommodation to the moral values and the literary criticism of the modern age—is not truly Christian at all; it is not so much a version, as it is a betrayal, of Christianity.

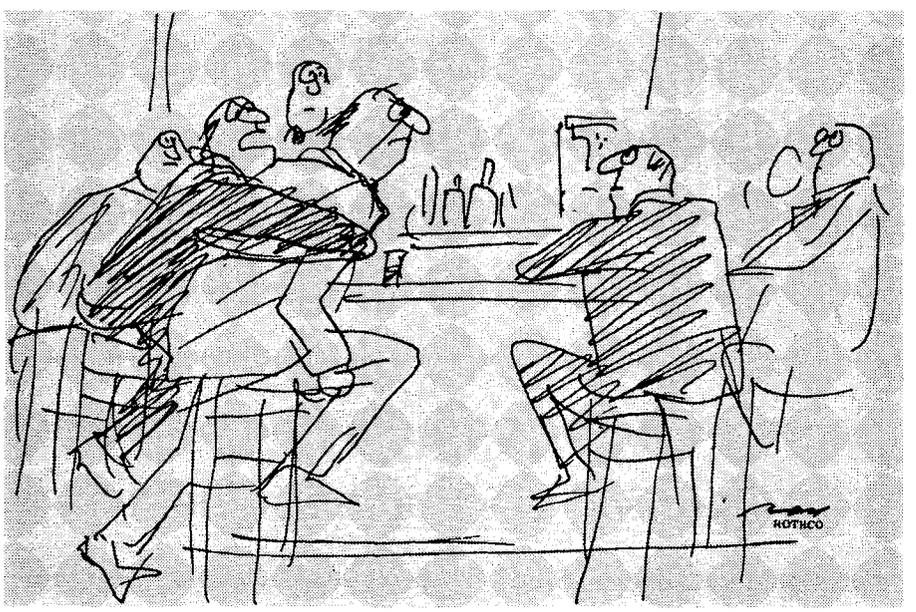
So long as the old Catholic-Protestant division remained socially significant, the two wings of American Protestantism tended to keep a lid on their dislike for one another. But once Catholics and Protestants entered the era of mutual good feelings, liberal and conservative Protestants were free to commence an era of mutual bad feelings, which they did.

As a result, the word "liberal" is in terribly bad odor among conservative Protestants, carrying as it does anti-Christian connotations. Among such folks, a politician is dead if he or she gets identified as a liberal, and no amount of refined distinctions between church and state, between liberalism in politics and liberalism in religion, will save such an unfortunate campaigner.

But if political liberals had to write off only conservative Protestants, they could still get elected president while waving the liberal banner; for conservative Protestants, numerous though they are, are yet nowhere close to being a majority of the American population. But the trouble goes much deeper and much broader than that. You don't have to be a conservative Protestant to dislike political liberals.

Americans who dislike the word "liberal" may not be about to repudiate the content of the liberal tradition. Maybe they are just being a bit sloppy in their use of words. In fact, those who call themselves conservative intend to conserve, not so much the preliberal values that classic conservatives like Edmund Burke meant to conserve, but the values of liberalism itself; thus to be an American conservative is to belong to a species of liberal.

Nonetheless, there is something very disquieting about a situation in which a liberal society develops a distaste for the word that best describes that society. Let me suggest a hypothetical parallel. Suppose that the great majority of Catholics, while not repudiating Catholicism or its traditions, indeed while proclaiming their loyalty to the church and its values, all of a sudden took it into their heads never to use the word "Catholic" except as a term of abuse, a stick with which to beat certain of their co-religionists; while these latter squirmed this way and that to avoid describing themselves as Catholic. Wouldn't we have good reason for worrying about the long-term future of Catholicism in such a case? The parallel is not exact, I admit; but I suspect we have reason to be nervous about the long-term future of liberalism in a society in which the word "liberal" has become "the L word." □



"Wait a minute! He said stoical. *I think that's a compliment!"*

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DEAR FRIENDS

THE EUCHARIST: WHO MAY PRESIDE?

DON TIMMERMAN
GORDON C. ZAHN
JOHN F. BALDOVIN

Some months ago we received an article from Gordon Zahn in the form of "An Open Letter to the Catholic Worker." In it he wrote of a Catholic Worker house that permitted nonordained persons to preside at its liturgies. As a friend of the Catholic Worker Movement, he saw this as destructive of the C.W. and contrary to the spirit of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. After long discussion and a good deal of appreciation for his fraternal tone, the editors returned Zahn's article urging him to publish it in the *Catholic Worker*. The editors did decide, however, that since the practice of the nonordained presiding at liturgies was not likely to be confined to the C.W., it would be helpful to ask a theologian to reflect on it and perhaps to draw some general lessons for all of us. John Baldovin, S.J., agreed to write that article. In the meantime, Casa Maria, the Milwaukee C.W. house, circulated a letter making it clear that they were the group of whom Zahn had written—and were willing to have their views on the matter made public. Stung a bit by Zahn's subsequent criticism of our decision—"having a theologian address the broader issue [is] likely to shift the focus from actual practice to the more distanced and theoretical-...with the result that...[such articles] are seldom related to the issue as it is encountered day to day"—we decided to print the two open letters and Baldovin's reflection which we think has the sobering effect of reminding all of us of the range of issues that are at stake in this discussion.

THE EDITORS

DON TIMMERMAN *is a long-time member of the Catholic Worker community in Milwaukee. He is associated with Amnesty International and The Pledge of Resistance.*

GORDON C. ZAHN *is national director of the Center on Conscience and War and the author of* German Catholics and Hitler's Wars *and other books.*

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Dear Friends:

On October 11, 1987 we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Catholic Worker movement in Milwaukee and the twentieth anniversary of the present Catholic Worker house, Casa Maria. The house is and has been a controversial one. Mike Cullen, who founded Casa Maria with his wife Netty, was at one time reprimanded by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for his actions, which were considered too political. The U.S. government deported Mike to Ireland, his homeland, after he refused to pay federal taxes and burned draft cards with the Milwaukee 14 during the Vietnam War.

More recently, we at Casa Maria have been scolded by some because of our liturgies at the house. Several times we have been called and reprimanded by the archdiocesan chancery for having "improper" Masses.

The problem the church and some Catholic Workers have with our liturgies is that we allow women, laymen, and sometimes non-Catholics to preside at them. And sometimes the format of the liturgies is not that condoned by the magisterium in Rome. We still claim to be Catholic Workers since we believe strongly in the philosophy of the Catholic Worker movement. We try to practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. We take in homeless families and single women, give food to the hungry, give furniture and household items to the poor, offer a listening ear to the many lonely and depressed persons who come our way, give clothing to the needy, and try to change our society from a violent, greedy, "dog-eat-dog" society into a nonviolent, personalist one. And, of course, we realize that God is the source and reason for our work.

That is why we have formal prayer once a week as a community. And since our community is composed of people of various religious beliefs and denominations, we try to allow these people to take part in our liturgies. In regard to allowing women to preside at our liturgies, we feel that it is right and just to do so. We feel that it is wrong to forbid women the opportunity to preside at Mass, and since it is wrong, we refuse to follow the church mandate which states that only men may preside at Mass. If we accuse our society of being unjust and, thus, refuse to cooperate with it, then we also have an obligation to see the injustice in the church and refuse to cooperate with it also.

We would welcome feedback, and any criticisms of our beliefs, on the above comments. And we would hope that you would come to our house sometime to visit and share with us and our guests. We are looking forward to having the Catholic Worker live on and flourish for another fifty years in Milwaukee. God's blessings on each and every one of you.

DON TIMMERMAN

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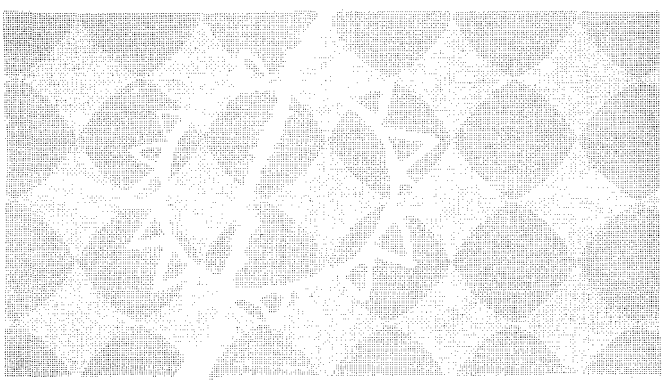
Dear Friends:

I am not, nor have I ever claimed to be, a full-fledged active Catholic Worker, and writing this letter has proved a very difficult occasion for me. Following my discharge from service as a World War II conscientious objector, the thought of joining the Worker crossed my mind, but one night at the Mott Street house was enough to convince me that my vocation lay elsewhere. However, I have been a more or less faithful "fellow traveler." For over a quarter century of college teaching I regularly made a point of including the Catholic Worker as a most significant and influential example of a religiously motivated social movement. It has been a unique force in the history of American Catholicism. That uniqueness lies in the Catholic Worker's almost perfect fusion between the commitment to service and its no less binding commitment to the Catholic church.

It is often claimed that the Catholic Worker "has no party-line," a claim based on a phrase used by Peter Maurin in one of his "Easy Essays" and later as a title for one of Dorothy Day's editorial contributions. Anyone familiar with the movement's past history will know that, apart from the narrowly political application both must have had in mind, the claim has no validity and makes no sense. Not in the past; not today. In the unlikely event some Catholic Worker community were to publicly endorse SDI, for instance, or any other aspect of the Reagan administration's confrontational anti-Communist foreign and military policies, it is a pretty safe bet that such a departure from "the party line" would bring censure, possibly even "expulsion" through formal dissociation.



The same rule ought to apply to those who would reject or disregard generally recognized and accepted norms of Catholic belief and practice. Here, too, individual Catholic Workers, frustrated by what they regard as insensitive or even unjust policies or regulations of the church, might find it difficult to continue participation in its ceremonials and observances. If so, it would then be a matter for the C.W. group with which such a person is affiliated to make its judgment as to whether he or she should remain in the work or if, to avoid internal dissension or giving scandal, it would be advisable to sever the relationship. But it is incomparably more serious for a Catholic Worker house as a definable part of the broader movement to reject or defy established ecclesiastical authority by disregarding rules and procedures relating to that most sacred core of Catholic belief, the liturgy itself.

Yet this is what seems to be taking place, as the above letter circulated by a member of the Milwaukee community confirms. The relevant passage reads, "The problem the church and some Catholic Workers have with our liturgies is that we allow women, laymen, and sometimes non-Catholics to preside at them. And sometimes the format of the liturgies is not that condoned by the magisterium in Rome."

If this is true—and if "preside" means "officiate"—the liturgy in question cannot be considered Catholic. To say this is not to deny that those who participate in such liturgies are faithful to some aspects of "the philosophy of the Catholic Worker." But it does say that they are not true to the most essential aspect of that philosophy and, to the extent that a particular community exhibits and promotes liturgical practices "not condoned," they depart from the full service to the spiritual works of mercy. By being "public" about this they may actually undermine the spiritual quality and validity of the movement's work by giving scandal and providing occasions for others, knowingly or not, to participate in improper or invalid Masses.

If nothing else, such actions offend the memory of the founders, to whom the liturgy was the indispensable heart of the movement and its work. Dorothy Day, in particular, would never have taken it upon herself—or allowed the movement—simply to ignore rules or regulations she found distasteful or even unjust and impose her private judgment over that of the "magisterium in Rome." Instead, she would have done what she always did (and with a remarkable degree of success) and kept on working for changes in the church from within the church as a loyal and obedient daughter of the church.

The Catholic Worker is worth preserving and the Catholic in its name signifies a continuing commitment to the spiritual vision Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day brought to its creation. Anything short of this is tantamount to false or misleading labeling. As far as the "dead hand of the past" is concerned, Dorothy Day would have been the last to allow the C.W. to be ruled according to what had been done before. But it is equally certain that she would have been the first to reject changes that threatened to weaken the movement's basic commitment to the recognized and legitimate authority of the church. She would not deny the faults and failures that call for correction, but she would insist that the correction must come through the efforts of true believers guided by love and respect for the church as it is, imperfections and all—and as, given God's grace, we can help it become. In this sense at least, the Catholic Worker movement she founded could do no better than to accept and follow her guidance.

GORDON C. ZAHN

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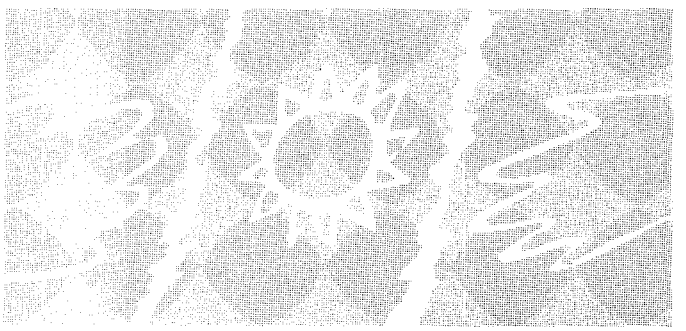
The current discipline of the Roman Catholic church with regard to the eligibility of candidates for holy orders continues to raise a host of difficult and complex problems for theology. Since small groups of Catholics have begun to take the matter into their own hands and to choose nonordained men and women to preside at the Eucharist, it may be helpful to identify the issues involved with a view to reasonable discussion. I use the phrase "reasonable discussion" because just who may preside has become much more than a question for academic theology; it is fraught with implications for the church's identity and therefore somewhat of an emotional minefield as well.

The foregoing may seem rather tentative—and it is—because there are a number of significant values that clash over this question, for example, the nature of the church as sacrament as opposed to the right of an individual community to the Eucharist or the nature of ordained ministry compared to the ministry of all the baptized. I, for one, am convinced of the contemporary necessity to emphasize the dignity that *all* of the baptized have received in virtue of their initiation into Christ. Contemporary witness to the gospel demands active, committed Catholics who are explicitly aware of their vocation as a sign to the world of Christ's saving activity. We are not merely passive recipients of this activity but active participants cooperating to make the reality of salvation ever more evident in a world that desperately needs to hear the Good News. Hence radical distinctions between the ordained and the nonordained, especially in terms of "power," are not all that helpful.

On the other hand, it seems to me that it is an irreducible Catholic conviction that the saving reality of Christ has not been communicated to individuals merely as individuals but rather as members of Christ's body, the church—hence the emphatic concern for the union or communion of believers right from the beginning of the church's experience, a concern revealed rather clearly in Acts 15, 1 Corinthians, and 1 John. Needless to say, this concern for unity has been no mere pious or theoretical wish in the course of history. It has been necessary because unity has been so difficult to maintain both in doctrinal and in practical matters.

Today we are faced with a widespread worldview that emphasizes individual development to such an extent that previous church-fracturing struggles seem to pale by comparison. Perhaps Vatican II's emphasis on the importance of the local Christian community has been too "successful." In other words, the links between local churches are in danger of being broken. I see this often in liturgical settings where individual communities become so taken with their appropriation of the gospel that they lose sight of the wider church and its tradition of continuity. No doubt this tradition has often been perverted for ideological reasons and needs to be criticized. But this does not entail a wholesale rejection of the tradition as such. That would leave us with a religion of our own making. The problem is that tradition has often been confused with traditionalism. Even the former has become a dirty word as a result of this confusion. Unfortunately, the alternative to tradition seems to imply that "my personal experience" becomes the governing criterion for what is real and salvific about the gospel. Once this move is made, the church becomes an association of the like-minded not the Body of Christ obediently living under the judgment of the gospel.

The contemporary focus on the value and dignity of the individual has thus resulted in heightening what I suspect will continue to be an irrreducible tension between a laudable and necessary recognition of the person as unique individual and the individual's membership in a Body of Christ that is far greater than his or her own appropriation of the gospel. To put it plainly, the tension between the individual (or a group of like-minded individuals) and the church, as sacramental of God's activity in the world, is here to stay. It does not admit of a theoretical or practical resolution.



In light of these preliminary thoughts, I want to offer the following reflections. The ordained ministry represents a fundamental aspect of the church's life. The Christian community needs and will always need ministers who have committed themselves fully and permanently to serving the community, preaching the Gospel, and leading liturgical celebrations. Note that I am not arguing here from divine institution, in other words, that we ought to have certain kinds of office in the church because Christ explicitly desired the church to have this sort of constitution. It is difficult to argue this way in light of contemporary biblical studies and Christology. The variety of New Testament ministries and their slow development into the ordered offices known as deacon-presbyter-bishop that has characterized the Catholic church since the late second century shows that Jesus did not set down a blueprint at the start. The same can be said for the sacraments. By a kind of naive positivism some might argue (and many have) that any developments after Jesus and the first generation of apostles are suspect or, at least, not essential to Christianity. It was just such confusion about institution by Christ that clouded the Reformation debate over the sacraments, although concern for explicit institution by Christ is a phenomenon that appears only

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in the late eleventh century. It seems plausible to me, however, that if one were to argue that Christ did not command his apostles to repeat certain actions at the Last Supper or even if he did not explicitly utter words of institution over the bread and the cup at that meal, one could still argue that the church in the power of the Spirit is faithful to Christ by celebrating that ritual meal whose structure and content accurately recapitulate his passion, death, and resurrection.

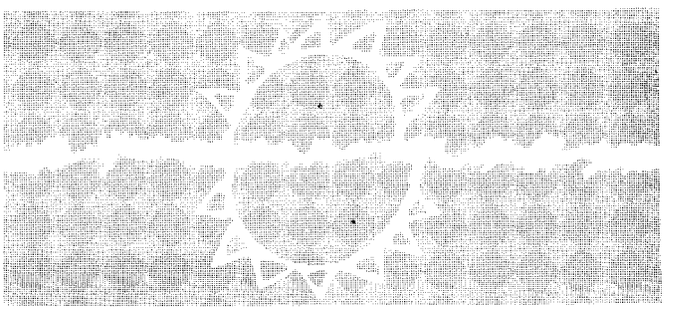
All of this calls for considerable demythologization of the history of the New Testament texts—a task that Vatican II's *Lumen gentium* (18-19, 28) and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ("The Minister of the Eucharist," *Origins*, 13:14, September 1983) have been unwilling to undertake. But demythologizing does not mean invalidation. The church can and does arrange its ordained ministry and sacraments. In fact, one can say that the sacraments themselves constitute the church as the living Body of Christ. I hope that this approach shows why it is important to avoid the objectified language of "powers" that are granted to some members of the church on behalf of others. Power is, of course, an unavoidable concept when one is dealing with any kind of organization. But the kind of power at issue here is one that is used in service of the entire enterprise and based on charisms of service, leadership, preaching, presiding, and so forth that are given by God and recognized by the church. While this leaves no room for a kind of democracy in which any member of the community can perform any function, it also avoids a kind of clerical-caste mentality that prevents any particular segment of the church from truly owning the whole church's evangelical mission.

Today's problem then is twofold. On the one hand, the emphasis on the church as primarily God's people, or, to use Avery Dulles's phrase, "a community of disciples," has greatly relativized hierarchical distinctions. A certain democratic approach considers even these distinctions odious. On the other hand, new consciousness of the dignity and charisms of women, dissatisfaction with mandatory celibacy, and the shortage of priests have all combined to raise the question of what makes people eligible to be ordained. It seems to me that it would be good to keep these issues distinct.

As to the first, I have no doubt that our consciousness of baptismal dignity and equality is a great boon to the mission of the church. In a very important sense, all the baptized are priests of the new covenant, priests whose sacrifice consists in responding to God's self-gift in Christ by offering themselves. At the same time we know a kind of secondary priesthood in the church, one in which some have been appointed to articulate this fundamental self-sacrifice in full-time service and particularly in a ritual manner, especially by their presidency at the Eucharist.

There are several dialectical relations here. First, there is the dialectic of God's call and human response characterized by self-sacrifice. Second, there is the dialectic of that response in daily life and its ritualization in sacramental activity under the presidency of ordained ministers. Finally, there is the dialectic implied by the very language we use. Much difficulty can be avoided when we recognize that terms like "priesthood," "sacrifice," and "kingdom" have been transformed in Christian understanding. They bear an ironic relation to their pre- or non-Christian usage. We often fail to remember that a religious faith that makes the outrageous claim that God saved us by dying does not lend itself to nondialectical affirmations. Priesthood is a term that the New Testament employs only of Christ (Hebrews) and the whole body of believers (1 Peter 2:9, Rev. 1:6). Its use is clearly metaphorical. *A fortiori* the use of the same term for ordained ministers connotes an even more complex metaphor. We have become very well aware today of the oddity of the language we use of God, but rarely apply the same standard to discourse about the church and its activities. None of the foregoing implies that we should abolish the real distinction between the baptized and the ordained. The recognition of the candidates for ordination as possessing certain charisms inevitably sets them apart. But to separate the ordained and nonordained too radically would be to miss the point as to why one priesthood (the ordained) was created to serve the other (the baptized).

The second issue with regard to ordination is at the same



time simpler in theory and more difficult to resolve in practice. The current shortage of priests (which will only get worse) forces us to question both the wisdom and the justice of withholding ordination from women and married men. Without denying the sign value of celibacy—a sign of contradiction for exclusively this-worldly standards—one can still legitimately ask why marriage would prevent a person from full service to the community, preaching the gospel, and liturgical presidency. As a matter of fact, the asceticism demanded of the married today can often enhance these ministries. Further, if baptism means the incorporation of an individual into conformity with Christ, it is very difficult to see how a cogent argument can be mounted against ordaining women. The slogan, "If you won't ordain women, don't baptize them," reflects a profound insight into the nature of the church.

(Continued on page 466)

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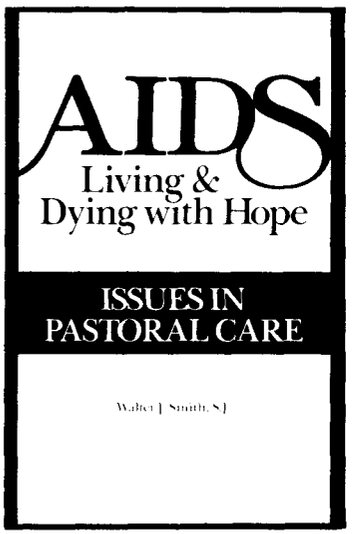

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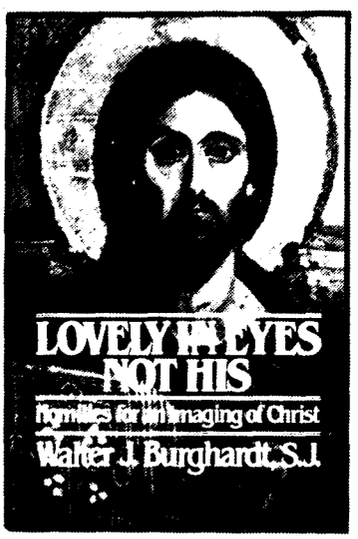

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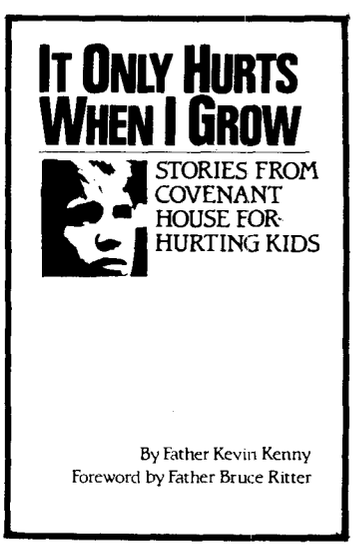
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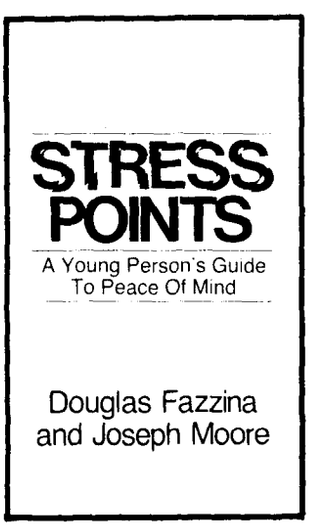

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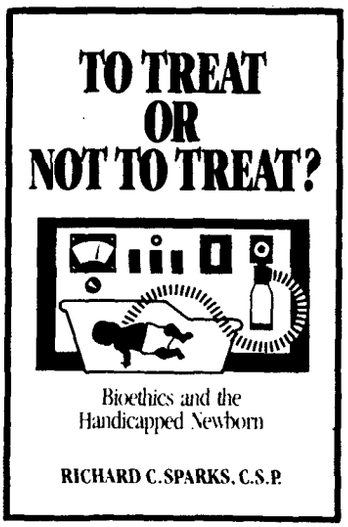

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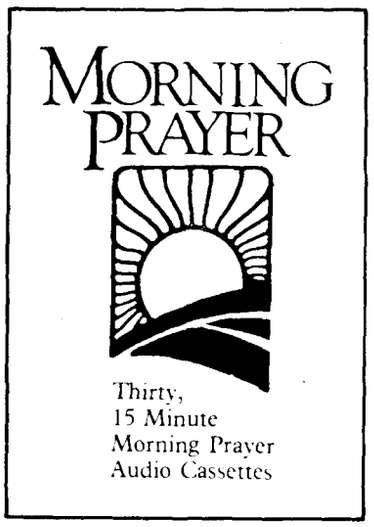

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If the matter is as simple as I have just made it out to be, then why don't we ordain women and married men? I suspect that the answer lies far deeper than rational theological argument. A case in point of the debate breaking down on rational grounds can be found in Joseph Fessio's lamentable paper circulated to the 1987 Synod on the Laity against allowing women as acolytes (*Origins*, 17:22, November 12, 1987). The root Catholic perception of ordination (and therefore of liturgical presidency) has a great deal to do with a whole system of purity. Convictions about purity lie deeply ingrained in our collective Catholic unconscious and must be brought to light if we are ever to get to the bottom of the question of ordination. In my opinion the whole of the New Testament presents difficulties for anyone who would want to argue for a cultic understanding of worship and therefore for a system of purity that is anything other than ethical (see, for example, Mark 7:1-23). For all of our contemporary preoccupation with sex and sexuality, we have not appreciated very well how profoundly sexuality affects our understanding of reality. Perhaps our problems at this level will only be resolved practically: the vast majority of people may only change their attitude toward purity in so far as it is connected with ordained ministry after they have experienced women and married men as holy and competent in this role.

But until women and married men can be ordained, what should Catholics who are convinced of the necessity and justice of such ordinations do? It seems to me that the most appropriate response is continued discussion of this issue as well as clear and vocal expression of dissatisfaction with the current limitations on ordained ministry. Some, I am sure, want to go further and argue, on the basis of Schillebeeckx's contention in *Ministry*, that the right of the Eucharist is so fundamental that local communities have the right to appoint their own presiders in cases where a serious lack of ministers occurs. The situations they have in mind are not necessarily mission churches, where no presiders are available, at least for long periods, but a kind of "moral" lack of presiders given what they consider an unjust policy.

There is a good deal to be said for Schillebeeckx's position. The celebration of the Eucharist is indeed the ongoing ritual symbol which expresses the identity of the church, and to do without it weakens the church as sacramental sign. For this reason the 1983 letter of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, "The Minister of the Eucharist," is insensitive when it states of communities that lack priests: "Through their desire for the sacrament in union with the church, no matter how distant they may be physically, they are intimately and really united to her and therefore receive the fruits of the sacrament." Here the document promotes a remarkable weakening of the very sacramental principle it intends to reinforce. It almost seems to affirm a let-them-eat-cake attitude toward churches experiencing a dearth of priests.

Nor does the increasingly popular practice of Sunday communion services presided over by deacons or lay ministers have much to recommend it. As several liturgical commentators (Gabe Huck and Robert Hovda, for example) have pointed out, the practice results in confusion about the nature of eucharistic celebration. The Communion elements, when divorced from the celebration of the Eucharist, become a focus unto themselves—surely a regression, given the past twenty-five years of liturgical reform. Or worse, people cannot tell the difference between these services and the eucharistic celebration, as in "Sister X had the nine o'clock Mass today" (no exaggeration). It would be far better to let people so hunger for the Eucharist that they demand a widening of eligibility for ordination. This is precisely, I sense, what the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith fears.

If the reader is frustrated at this point, it is not without good reason. The situation is both frustrating and angering. But is the answer for communities to either (a) pass over the issue of ordination altogether, or (b) to ordain their own presiders regardless of church discipline? I cannot regard either solution as viable, for either would do immense damage to the fabric of the church-at-large. In fact, for an individual community to "ordain" its own presiders on its own initiative would be to separate itself from the Catholic church. There is an issue of basic honesty here. To ignore or defy the discipline of the church at such a deeply symbolic level is what is meant by the term, schism.

Another frustration must be noted here. I have consistently and intentionally employed the term "presider" and not "celebrant." By being forced to argue over the question of eucharistic presidency, we have been detoured from the far more basic consideration of the liturgical assembly itself as the celebrant of the Eucharist. That is why I always insist that my students use the term "presider" instead of "celebrant." Presiders do indeed play a vital role in eucharistic celebration, but never one that is radically separate from the community which celebrates. Until we have understood that distinction, we shall not experience the fruit of genuinely active participation that Vatican II and the past twenty-five years of liturgical reform have sought to bring about. In other words, it is a pity that an article like this has to be written.

JOHN F. BALDOVIN

Claire Will Faulhaber

Ballad of Male Hegemony

Ecclesial power remaineth, oremus,
With those who can say, "Testiculos habemus."

Empowering persons whose claim is testiculi
Strikes millions of women as pretty ridiculi.

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JESUS GETS THE BEAT

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN SCORSESE

MARY PAT KELLY

On August 12, after a month of controversy, *The Last Temptation of Christ* opened to sell-out business in nine cities. World media focused on the director Martin Scorsese. After a fifteen-year struggle he had fulfilled his dream of making a movie based on the 1951 novel by Nikos Kazantzakis published in the United States in 1960. The debate began. Was Scorsese, as accused in a protest leaflet handed out in front of New York's Ziegfeld Theater, "the greatest blasphemer in 2,000 years"? Or was he what he said he was, "An artist who made the movie as an act of worship"?

Suddenly in *Time* and *Newsweek,* on the evening news and Nightline, in Thai restaurants and in bars, Christ's dual nature became a hot topic. It's really not surprising that a Martin Scorsese picture is generating such impassioned discussion. For twenty years his films have forced audiences and critics to confront disturbing realities: on the *Mean Streets* of Little Italy, in the boxing ring of *Raging Bull,* on the front seat of a cab in *Taxidriver*. The characters in all his films seek some kind of salvation. In *Martin Scorsese: The First Decade* (Redgrave, 1980), Scorsese spoke to me of how the theme of redemption informs his work. And though I did not work on the present version of this film, in 1983 I helped Scorsese in the research for an earlier effort to make *The Last Temptation of Christ*. I saw him return again and again to ideas about God and Christ he first encountered in Catholic grade school. Now in August 1988 these concerns took center stage. We spoke in his office four days after the film opened.

SCORSESE: I always wanted to do a movie on Jesus, on a Jesus who was approachable on the human side. Though we say "fully human, fully divine," the Jesuses we get in the movies are more divine. The humanity seems to have been stripped away. In this film, he's more human. Through the humanity he has to find the divinity, to accept the divinity. The divinity doesn't seem to give him much help along the way.

If Jesus was mostly divine and the humanity was only one-tenth of his nature, then why would he have any trouble resisting temptation? What meaning would the resistance of the temptation in the desert have? It wouldn't have any meaning. What would the meaning of the sacrifice on the cross have? It wouldn't have any meaning because he would know that he would be raised again in three days, that it's easy to die, and there's no problem because he's God!

I chose to focus on Jesus' humanity because I think that gives us a better understanding of what it means when they say, "He died for our sins." That's what I thought and Kazantzakis seemed to be the right material to work through.

We're not saying that Kazantzakis is the gospel truth. It's an idea ... an idea, a film that was made to set off discussions. Not necessarily the kind of controversy that has occurred, but of people taking Jesus seriously. If you take him seriously, then you take his ideas seriously, which are the ideas of love, loving God, loving your neighbor as yourself. I think those are the most important and the hardest things to do. I think that's why the picture was made. I'm speaking for me, that's totally my point of view, and my personal relationship to the material. To make a movie I have to feel something about the subject matter. And this is what I feel in this case. I'm not using it as a sermon, I'm not sitting here lecturing the world. It's simply my personal approach to the material, which was the Kazantzakis idea.

KELLY: Explain what you mean by taking Jesus seriously.

SCORSESE: We see in Woody Allen's *Hannah and Her Sisters,* when he goes to become a Christian, naturally he's perplexed when he sees a 3-D Jesus winking at him. I mean, how can you take that seriously? Or the Jesus that you put on the dashboard, or Jesus on velvet. How can you take that seriously? Now maybe it's kind of a low blow in the movie [*Hannah*], but we deserve it, because we've let these images take over and give non-Christians the wrong point of view. The wrong images. Now I know that people don't worship the images, they worship God. But even though these 3-D Jesuses and these plastic statutes are kitsch and I can appreciate them more as art than as religion, I think it holds Jesus up to ridicule by non-Christians. And that's the difference. As far as Catholics go, if they want to have a blinking Jesus in 3-D, great. I'm not saying it's wrong. But to non-Christians it seems pretty peculiar, very undignified.

MARY PAT KELLY *is a writer and filmmaker. Her last film,* To Live for Ireland, *won the special jury award at the San Francisco International Film Festival.*

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KELLY: All kinds of culturally mediated images of Jesus clutter believers' understanding too. How did you get your sense of Jesus beyond conventional representations?

SCORSESE: I think the Kazantzakis book opened up somewhat my sense of it. That's basically it. And then I decided to take more risks with it. The whole movie takes risks: it takes risks in dialogue, it takes risks in the accents of actors, in costumes, locations, everything. I figured the more risks the better.

KELLY: Why?

SCORSESE: Well, it puts you in an artistic state of emergency all the time. You're always on the edge. It's big risks, big gambles. I think you have to work that way to get something good.

KELLY: The idea of risk brings to mind another issue. In *Last Temptation* women are part of the Last Supper.

SCORSESE: This Jesus was so great, how could he say, "wait in the kitchen," to these women? Especially because he was a man who broke the rules. He would have done it, I believe, he really would have done it. He would have them partake of the sacrifice, have them partake of the first Mass. I don't think he made a difference between men and women. Why should he? Are women subhuman? Are they only half-known to God? Doesn't God know them fully?

I said to myself, after these women have been with him the whole movie, they'd stuck with him and they're the only ones at the Crucifixion. The only ones at the Resurrection are women although in one gospel John was there too. But Jesus appears to the women first. He's telling us something. And so I said they have to partake of the Last Supper. They had to.

KELLY: And yet you are criticized for presenting women as vessels of temptation.

SCORSESE: Well, Kazantzakis's book is anti-female. The women are certainly not representative of real people. One element [in the film] that does come across as evil is the snake. But the snake represents not just women but sex. It represents the needs, the bodily needs. That's from Kazantzakis and maybe I should have changed the voice, not used Mary Magdalene's voice for the snake, but it seems the three main people in the film are Magdalene, Judas, and Jesus. So you have to keep that together.

For me, being a Catholic from before Vatican II, sex has always been portrayed as the most evil sin. Now we know the balance is off there, we know it's off, but I can't help it. That's what's in my mind. And it stayed with me that sexuality is evil. The snake represents sexuality in all its forms, even in thought. It's sex in all forms. It's the greatest gift from God, yet it still seems to pull us towards evil. That's what the snake represents and that's why Mary's voice is there. Because she represents the sexual nature; it has more to do with sex than it has to do with women.

KELLY: For many Catholics guilt about sex becomes an insurmountable barrier to developing a mature spiritual life. They sinned against purity, and that's that.

SCORSESE: Yes, the carnal seems to be always in the way. I know this kind of thinking is not legitimate, I think it's totally wrong. I think we're crippled because of it.

KELLY: Did you find that by working through this film you got beyond that?

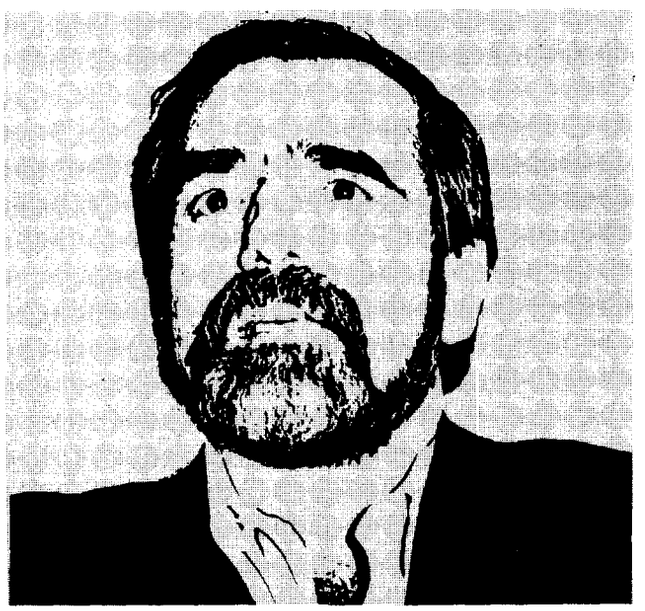
SCORSESE: No, not really. But I'm still making the film, let's put it that way. I haven't had time to really feel if the film has had any impact on me in that way. I have to jump right into making another film. I haven't had time to take a vacation, to think. I'm hoping the film will have some effect on me in a good way.

KELLY: In the film Jesus and Judas discuss what must come first, changing the spirit of the people, or getting rid of the Romans.

SCORSESE: You have to change the spirit of the people. Changing the spirit of all people means changing what's important to humanity. If you flip it over, the flipside of greed is generosity. The flipside of hate is love. If you go that way, it wouldn't matter who's in charge because the loving is the idea. And it seems that they would be fairer. I don't think everybody would be happy, but still life would not be based on greed, or taking over the world, or the subjugation of other people. Or power, just for the thrill of power.

KELLY: And that is Christ's message?

SCORSESE: I think so. That's a very high level of existence, maybe we're evolving to it. The whole question is can we get



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there, because we have the weapons now that can destroy all of us. So can we get there? Have we given in to our basic nature? Have we lost the game already? Because if we have the weapons we will use them somewhere. I wonder, have we given in to the darker side of ourselves? We're in a life and death struggle now, it seems to me. It's a nonintellectual point of view. If you want intellect, talk to [Paul] Schrader. He knows all that stuff.

I really try to go back to what Jesus said about how we should live and that's the most important thing. I want to get past the dogma. People need dogma; they find it comforting. Fine, but I'm just trying to get past that. Get back to the concept of what Jesus was and his relationship with God. His relationship to God the Father and our relationship to God through him.

KELLY: Do our attempts to live the Christian life have a parallel in the movie?

SCORSESE: Yes. The same kind of struggle and doubts and anxiety, but exhilaration, too. Remember in the film when Jesus says, "I'm the farmer. The farmer's me." He's very happy. It kind of elicits laughs from those around him. I don't think laughs of ridicule, but laughs of enjoyment. Here's this fellow, and he's suddenly enjoying himself, suddenly getting the right answers and this is really the way things are going. "I used to think God was angry, too," he says, "and then he blew over me like a cool breeze and said stand up and here I am." This also gets laughs from the people. See, he's not communicating with his audience yet. It's like a dialogue between him and God. He's saying, "I got it. I got what You're talking about. This is what it is, and I'm so happy about it!"

He starts communicating after that moment. When the people say, "Well, these are children's stories," then he says, "What do you want? You want justice right, you want respect," then he starts communicating. "Yes" he says, "you're mourning." But up until that point, he really isn't communicating. It's all within himself. He's like, well, he's getting the beat, he's getting the language and the rhythm of it. It's kind of funny in a sweet way, a nice way. It's watching a guy get himself together and it's great. When he gets it he feels terrific about it. He says, "Here I am."

KELLY: This image of Jesus getting the beat of his Father's message certainly goes beyond that of our early training.

SCORSESE: Oh, yes, I feel closer. I feel closer but then again people have said that this is me seeing myself in Jesus. But I don't think there's anything wrong with that—to see yourself in Jesus—because it is your attempt to come to some sort of terms with God. You have to start somewhere. It has to start on some level. It starts on the lowest level which is ourselves and has to get to the highest level which is God. You've got to do something, there has to be some way to get there.

KELLY: Did you find yourself praying while making this film?

SCORSESE: Oh, all the time. It was a nightmarish situation, a very difficult shoot. Of course, sometimes it's hard to tell what is prayer and what is superstition. Sometimes you know, though. During the mixing [editing] of the film, Tom Fleishman, who's a Christian, would choose a reading for the day from the Bible while we were getting hit with so many things from fundamentalists. He'd read to us. We were mixing for two-and-a-half weeks, day and night, including Saturday and Sunday, sometimes until three in the morning. Peter Gabriel was there, too. He was part of the readings.

KELLY: I notice the use of the quote from Isaiah, from the suffering servant, that is part of the Good Friday liturgy, and you've mentioned before the impact that those services had on you as a child.

SCORSESE: For me Holy Week was a very powerful, very dramatic time, much more dramatic than Christmas. The rituals were dramatic, the litanies were beautiful, the stations of the cross were very dramatic. This colored my whole approach to my sense of God. The emphasis was very much there, I think. Although I preferred Christmas, as I guess everyone does, because you get gifts. It's more fun! It's a happy time. But in Holy Week you have to go through from Spy Wednesday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. All these names alone—Passion Week—it's very terrifying. It was a scary time.

KELLY: And Easter Sunday? Do you believe in the Resurrection?

SCORSESE: Yes, I believe that what Paul preaches is true.

KELLY: But he is preaching that during the dream sequence and Jesus hasn't truly died or risen.

SCORSESE: I prefer to believe that Jesus goes back (after the dream sequence) and does everything that Paul says happened. That's the way I like to think of it. I believe it happened. I do have doubts. I am a devout Catholic. Maybe I'm not a good Catholic, maybe I'm not even a practicing Catholic.

Except for the fact of transcendence, I can't exactly say what the Resurrection means. But I prefer to believe in the Resurrection.

KELLY: Would you say what "the last temptation" is?

SCORSESE: The human side of you doesn't want to suffer. It wants peace. It wants tranquillity, it wants happiness and to be assured of that. It wants peace and quiet. The drama in your life should be family drama, not something like war. And Jesus is given this temptation. He's had enough drama in his life. He's had enough sacrifice and hardship. Now he can rest, for the next thirty-six years of his life. He can have a pleasant death, which is a great thing. And why not? We call earth a "vale of tears" and if you could be assured that you wouldn't

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suffer any more, that you'd have a wife and children, time to enjoy yourself and on top of that have a good death. . . . It's a great temptation.

KELLY: And why is it resisted?

SCORSESE: Because he comes to terms with his own nature, the divine nature. He had to die in order to give us the hope. To give us hope that God loves us.

KELLY: To be willing to become one with us?

SCORSESE: Yes, by dying for our sins. It's the idea of relinquishing, or cleansing. That God understands exactly what his creatures go through. That's the idea, I think. And he has sympathy for us. And pity for us. That's what dying for our sins means, I think. I'm not a theologian. □

SCREEN

JESUS AS HAMLET

'THE LAST TEMPTATION'

The Last Temptation of Christ has been labeled "blasphemy" by some religious groups, and "morally offensive" by the Communications Department of the USCC. Yet the movie is sincerely meant. Director Martin Scorsese—a non-practicing Catholic and former junior seminarian—made this film from a deep desire to express his own religious beliefs, which are both unorthodox and earnest. Scorsese displays none of the sarcasm dismissive of religion prevalent in so many films in the last decade. His movie completes a serious, fifteen-year project, begun after he read Nikos Kazantzakis's novel in the early 1970s. The book has been popular at some Protestant divinity schools and among theologians taking a new look at the human aspects of Christ. The book and the film are two from the heart.

None of this makes the movie less irksome: "blasphemy" (or should it be "heresy"?) hurts more when it comes from within a tradition. Scorsese is disingenuous when he feigns shock that his film has offended people. Universal Pictures, distributor of the film, is also disingenuous in its claim that the sex in the film doesn't matter because it occurs while Christ dreams on the cross: the whole film industry trades on the credibility of dreams. Intentionally or not, Universal also issued misleading prerelease statements about the content of the dream, which is neither as short nor as innocent as it claims. On the other hand, those who say the film is irreligious or, worse, a "Jewish production" are wildly off base; if anything, it has some anti-Semitic images and lines, including one about Jewish politicians.

Did I find the film "morally offensive"? No. Am I horrified that some do? No. No recent film is more difficult to judge on both moral and aesthetic grounds. Scorsese has created moments of genuine spiritual grandeur: the raising of Lazarus; a small scene after an improvised "sermon on the mount"; and Jesus' final words of triumph. A master of gore in his previous films, Scorsese has also provided gruesome scenes—perhaps too strong for some stomachs—of the bone-crunching reality of a crucifixion. But his dramatic touch is uneven, yielding long exposition scenes filled with tortured verbal gobbledygook and tedious passages, including the dream sequence in which the crucified Jesus unconsciously imagines what an ordinary, domestic life would have meant.

But the dream is not merely weak dramatically; its content also raises several deeper questions. It begins well—with an angelic figure leading Christ (Willem Dafoe) down from the cross to a beautiful, lush landscape where he finds Mary Magdalene (Barbara Hershey). Did Scorsese need the explicit love-making that follows? It's not in the novel; the sequence goes on far longer than necessary; it develops into other scenes where, it is implied, this domesticated Christ practices bigamy. Aside from the unease the explicit sex causes, these scenes weaken the original point of the dream—a contrast between the cross and simple domestic joy, not the cross and sexual promiscuity.

A dream with a simple sequence of Christ and Mary Magdalene (perhaps even with some modest display of affection) would have served just as well—were it not for Scorsese's penchant for overstatement and, to be frank, a troubling view of sex. At its core the film manifests a Manichean opposition between goodness and sexuality. It poses a sexist opposition between a pseudo-spiritual macho sense of mission and the lure of women: once Christ loves one woman, the screenplay implies, all hell breaks loose. Lurking behind this is the same obsessive puritanism about human nature that Scorsese ostensibly wants to attack. Both Kazantzakis and Scorsese share the modern, puritanical reduction of sin to "sins of the flesh"; the world and the devil are mostly forgotten.

Both the novel and the film also project modern attitudes into the past, flattening history into a pale reflection of the present. Looking backward can often mean fresh perception of the past through revising worn interpretations, bringing to light neglected facts, or underlining the role of marginal groups. But creative revision and naive projection are different; the first gives us real relevance, the second shlock. Scorsese manages some of the former with scenes of cult-like frenzy and homeless and mad people in the streets of Judea: the cinematography suggests powerful and troubling likenesses to today.

But Scorsese relies on Kazantzakis's treatment, which presents Jesus not only as very human, but as very modern—a Hamlet, an existential searcher, at times an antihero: the novel could have been called *The Last Temptation of J. Alfred Prufrock*. The film preserves this modern aspect and Scorsese presents Christ as a neo-Romantic, who declares "the law is against my heart." Such a line not only distorts Jesus' words

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("I come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it"); it also says what no man of historical Judea could ever possibly have said. And Scorsese insists Jesus certainly was a man.

Add to this Scorsese's choice of everyday language to underline "relevance." It makes some scenes laughable, particularly those involving the Judas figure (an entirely novel conception of the character, played by Harvey Keitel), who talks like a Mafioso (or is he imitating the tough guy character actor Jack Warden?). Other actors rely on clichéd acting tricks (raised eyebrows, piercing squints) to make points; shave the beards, change costumes, and it's the local news. There might have been some spiritual resonance in the use of modern language if understatement ruled; as Wordsworth said, bare simplicity can result in poetry. But the film's diction isn't plain modern English or even American; it's low, broad Californian. Barry Miller as Jeroboam is especially awful. In directing his cast, Scorsese has mistaken solipsism for relevance. He also undercuts his efforts at authenticity—the grimy shots of ancient Palestine, or the wildly eclectic, highly Oriental musical score—when the actors (in the ultimate banality) are "just like us."

There are two notable exceptions. David Bowie is a strong Pilate, his English accent nicely conveying an elegant Roman. Willem Dafoe, the benign, almost Christ-like sergeant in *Platoon*, is at times an inspiring Jesus. His explanation of nonviolence as "breaking the chain of evil" is especially compelling. He has no better moment—and Scorsese makes no better case for the "humanity" and "relevance" of this image of Christ—than, when challenged about apparent changes in doctrine, Jesus explains, "God doesn't tell me everything at once; I only get it pieces at a time." The line strikes home for anyone who has experienced the struggle to see through a glass darkly. At least Scorsese has a real sense of that hard agony.

TOM O'BRIEN

THE BOOK BEHIND THE FILM

Jesus wrestles with God

GEORGE L. SCHEPER

In the "holy furor" surrounding Martin Scorsese's film *Last Temptation*, the figure who seems to have gotten lost is Nikos Kazantzakis, the author of the 1955 novel upon which the film is based. In this country Kazantzakis is best known for his Dionysian-spirited earlier novel *Zorba the Greek* and the Cacoyannis film starring Anthony Quinn (and Quinn's subsequent Broadway rendition). Beyond this, what most people seem to know, even if they have not read it, is that *The Last Temptation of Christ* earned Kazantzakis a place on the Catholic Index of Forbidden Books and caused him to be denied Christian burial by the Greek Orthodox church.

All this has left an aura about Kazantzakis that he was just another in the long line of the twentieth-century's heterodox writers beloved by questioning college students and deplored by parents and church elders. But anyone who has read more than one work by Kazantzakis, and particularly his autobiography, *Report to Greco*, or his wife Helen's biography, may sense that Kazantzakis is arguably one of the major religious artists of our time. His whole life was a labor of love to be true to an authentic quest for the Spirit. That his spiritual quest led him successively to Lenin, Buddha, St. Francis, and Christ is no indication of sophomoric shallowness. Each of his commitments represented a disciplined study and ascetic devotion to the path of each of these "Leaders of the Soul" (his midlife attempt to come to terms with their conflicting prophetic voices was his magnum opus, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel*, a poem of 33,333 verses to which he single-mindedly devoted himself for thirteen years). "All roads are holy," he proclaimed—so long as one's road is a pilgrimage of self-transcendence. "God is the search for God."

The one "Leader of the Soul" that haunted Kazantzakis all his life was Christ. "Christ tormented me," he says, "from my childhood years," adding, "the yearning, so human, so superhuman, of man to attain to God or, more exactly, to return to God and identify himself with him—has always been a deep inscrutable mystery to me." He wrote a play, a poem, and two novels on the Christ theme, but the "subject remains for me inexhaustible, because the mystery of the struggles of man and god, of the flesh and the spirit . . . is inexhaustible." For Kazantzakis, Christ was the supreme and indispensable image of self-transcendence: "What attracted me and gave me courage above everything else was how—with what striving and derring-do, what frantic hope—the person [Jesus] who found himself in Christ set out to reach God and merge with Him, so that the two might become indissolubly one. There is no other way to reach God but this. Following Christ's bloody tracks, we must fight to transubstantiate the man inside us into spirit, so that we may merge with God."

Kazantzakis tells the story in *Report to Greco* of meeting a fierce ascetic on Mount Athos, Father Makarios, who confided to the young Kazantzakis that he had spent his time wrestling with God. " 'With God!' I exclaimed in astonishment. 'And

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you hope to win?' 'I hope to lose, my child.'" For Kazantzakis, spiritual fulfillment means to *lose*—and to submit to union with God.

This little parable should dispel the misunderstandings of those who are upset by Scorsese's portrayal of a Christ who is not only confused, fearful, and tempted (which, as Andrew Greeley and other theologians have pointed out, is no more than a dramatization of Jesus' genuine humanity), but, more disturbingly, so evasive and resistant to God's call that at the opening of the novel and the film he works as a maker of crosses for the Romans. This is no mere perversity on Scorsese's, or Kazantzakis's, part. This Jesus is doing everything he can to "disqualify" himself from God's terrible call—he is wrestling with God. So Kazantzakis's Christ wrestles with God right up to the final bitter moment on the cross when Christ contemplates the vision of a calm and happy life and in a final triumph, rejects that vision, "loses" to God and says yes to his mission. Despite the fundamentalists' rage, Kazantzakis's spirituality, ironically, can be construed as quite conservative. Unlike the revisionist formulations of liberation theology, feminist theology, or, especially, creation-centered spirituality, which seek to disconnect Christianity from the dualistic Manichean tendencies it picked up in the Hellenistic world, Kazantzakis's Christ does opt finally for a world-denying, transcendentalist, and even sexist spirituality, in which sexuality, marriage, and domesticity appear as "temptations" and mothers and sex-partners as the prime "tempters" to a life of stability and ease.

But a close reading of the novel shows that Kazantzakis's Christ also has the spirit of Zorba in him, and that an almost pantheistic love and delight in the world as sacramental and holy balances his ascetic impulse. Perhaps that is what the fundamentalists instinctively sense, leading them to ignore the ascetic side of Kazantzakis's spirituality and to focus their outrage on the dramatization of the *imagined* sensuality of Jesus.

The crux of the spirituality of Kazantzakis's novel, and of Scorsese's film, is, of course, the notorious *last* temptation. What critics of the novel and the film seem consistently to have misunderstood is the role of Judas and of Paul in this sequence. One of Kazantzakis's revisionist ideas, of course, is that a reluctant Judas is recruited by Jesus to be his betrayer. This has to do with Kazantzakis's idea of self-transcendence, that one's mission will always be precisely that duty which is hardest for one's own nature—as is the role of betrayer for the fiercely loyal Judas. But more important, Paul and Judas play the role of what Kazantzakis elsewhere calls "saviors of God," saintly collaborators who assist in the great evolution and striving of everything to become God. Paul and Judas, in the dream sequence, help Christ become Christ. In Kazantzakis's most brilliant stroke, the figure of Paul, preaching Christ-crucified, confronts the manifestly uncrucified Jesus with grandchildren on his knee. Paul proclaims that his Christ of faith is more real and more true than the shabby "reality" in front of him. Judas follows this up by denouncing Jesus as a traitor who deserted his post on the cross. These searing dream-encounters shatter Jesus' "last temptation," freeing him to give his final assent to death on the cross.

However controversial it finally may be, there is far more to Kazantzakis's spirituality than is suggested by the fundamentalists' sad ire. One positive consequence of the protest is the film's opening disclaimer that it is a work of fiction, based on a novel, not the Gospels. It is a useful reminder that neither Kazantzakis nor Scorsese is rewriting history but both are responding imaginatively to the received tradition.

"The pages of my manuscript were often smudged because I could not hold back my tears. Parables which Christ could not possibly have left as the Gospels relate them I have supplemented, and I have given them the noble and compassionate ending befitting Christ's heart," said Kazantzakis. It distressed him that the "cassocked representatives" of Christianity who have themselves done so much to distort Christ's reality, should so misjudge and misrepresent his purpose.

Understandably, attention now focuses on Scorsese's film, but given the religious controversy that has erupted, surely it is helpful to understand the spirituality of the novel on which it is based. As filmic treatments of novels go, Scorsese's *Last Temptation* is remarkably "faithful" to its original. Paul Schrader's script drastically cuts the novel. But in doing so, Schrader comes up with a script less, not more, radical than the novel. Most of Jesus' revisionist teachings in the novel—tending toward universalism and pantheism—do not appear in the film. With all his doubts and fears, the Jesus of the novel is a much more *formidable* figure than actor Willem Dafoe's halting Jesus. And the shock of the "last temptation" is greater in the novel because it is not immediately apparent that one is reading a dream-vision, as is apparent in the film. Finally, what the film simply cannot capture is the novel's metaphorical texture. Where it tries to do so—as in the talking snakes and lion, or Jesus offering his heart to his disciples—the result is kitsch, not metaphor.

Scorsese's use of Moroccan settings is visually stunning but obscures Kazantzakis's careful distinction between the pastureland of Galilee and the fever-inducing desert of Judea; and while a sort of shocking grittiness and barbarism is conveyed by Scorsese's combination of desert landscape and Berber culture, the film lacks the intensely Hebraic character of Kazantzakis's novel. A kind of lurid graphicalness and colloquialism seem to be both the strength and the weakness of Scorsese's film (the visualization of the baptism scene as a tribalistic event, backed by a sort of rock-opera score, makes that segment appear perilously close to a pastiche of Norman Jewison's unintentionally camp film version of *Superstar*). By comparison, a work which ultimately succeeds in demythologizing, and remythologizing, the gospel story more consistently is the 1964 *Gospel According to Matthew* by Italian Marxist Pier Paulo Pasolini which, when all is said and done, remains the most serious and seriously disturbing translation of the gospel story into film. Nevertheless, as a good-faith adaptation of Kazantzakis's landmark novel, Scorsese's *Last Temptation* has performed a service—for art, and for religion, and deserves the wider audience that the protests will insure for it.□

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Instructive comparisons

ABORTION AND DIVORCE IN WESTERN LAW
Mary Ann Glendon
Harvard. $25. 197 pp.

Daniel A. Degnan

This book should change the way abortion and divorce are discussed in the United States. Mary Ann Glendon, who teaches law at Harvard, compares the laws of abortion and divorce in the United States and nineteen other Western nations.

In the nineteen other nations, among them France, West Germany, Italy, Sweden, England, abortion takes place against a context of strong social and economic support for mothers and children, including money payments, day care, and maternity leave. In almost all, the abortion law itself seeks to affirm and protect in some measure the value of developing human life. French law, for example, characterizes the factual situation as involving human life and states a general principle of respect for every human being from the commencement of life. In all these nations, abortions are limited and strictly regulated in the later weeks of pregnancy. Many of the countries require cause for abortions even in the early weeks of pregnancy.

In the United States, in contrast, the Supreme Court has declared a constitutional right to abortion even in the final weeks of pregnancy after viability. (The test then is the health of the mother, so broadly defined that there is no limitation.) Requirements of counseling, waiting periods, and even hospitalization in the second trimester have been struck down as interfering with that right. Only in the United States is abortion characterized as an individual right.

Divorce shows a similar contrast. In most of the Western countries, divorce at the petition of one party requires a finding of the breakdown of the marriage, based upon separation ranging from one to six years. In all of these nations, there are fixed, often generous (by American standards) requirements for the support of children by the former provider, supplemented by public benefits. Care is taken to ameliorate economic consequences for the other spouse. Countries such as France and West Germany add an explicit principle that marriage should be permanent, a provision, Glendon argues, that may have an important symbolic and educative function.

Only the United States and Sweden, by contrast, offer "no fault" divorce, the American term for easy termination of the marriage by either spouse. American judges have discretion in deciding on levels of support for children, and study after study shows a striking inadequacy in these decrees. With the United States' low level of public benefits for mothers and children, the children of divorce in this country are often severely disadvantaged.

In the United States, Glendon says, the definition of marriage has been rewritten: "marriage is a relationship that exists primarily for the fulfillment of the individual spouses. If it ceases to perform this function, no one is to blame and either spouse may terminate it at will. . . . Children hardly appear in this story; at most they are rather shadowy characters in the background."

Glendon finds meaning in these contrasts. In other Western nations, changes in the law of abortion and divorce were the product of national debate and major compromise. In the United States, the abortion debate was cut short when the Supreme Court imposed its own, minority view. Glendon corrects the misconception about American public opinion; it consistently rejects the Supreme Court's position of abortion-on-demand, while it also rejects complete prohibitions on abortion, especially in the earlier weeks of pregnancy.

The laws of Western nations, except for the United States, embody compromise, complexity, and above all an ordering of public values. The values of developing human life, marriage, and family are expressed in these laws, as are the interests of children and spouses. The United States, in contrast, has framed its laws of abortion and divorce to express the isolated choice of an individual.

In her final chapter, Glendon asks why the difference? The United States, Glendon argues, tends to look upon law as Hobbes did, as an exercise of power. There is no educative role for such coercive laws to play. A culture of individualism and John Stuart Mill's idea of liberty inform our recent laws governing abortion and divorce. Choice by an individual is the only standard of legality and right. Women are isolated, as are children, under these American laws.

The other Western nations, Glendon tells us, have remembered what the United States has forgotten. There are, first, the interpretive and constitutive functions of law. Our society's laws tell us the story of who we are and what we think of our obligations to developing human life, to children, to mothers and former spouses. Our laws also constitute or shape us, affecting our ideals and behavior, the way we meet our responsibilities to one another.

There is also the need for socially embodied argument, the debate by which our laws are formed. The legislative process, however imperfect, is a major way in which we as a society try to im-

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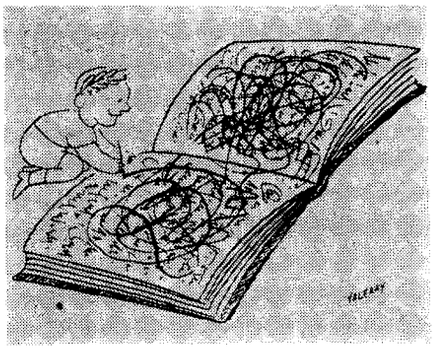
agine the right way to live. "The Supreme Court's decisions," Glendon writes, "have thus been doubly disappointing to the majority of Americans. Not only did the court get the story wrong, but it foreclosed the possibility of working out a better story."

Glendon argues eloquently that the United States need not be mired, as many believe, in an abortion debate in which either side must have total victory. "But the experience of other societies that have been just as deeply divided as ours, if not more so, on the abortion question, shows that when the legislative process is allowed to operate, *political* compromise is not only possible but typical." The different groups in these societies have been able to live peacefully and without frustration under these political compromises.

To prolife advocates, Glendon says that a law which communicates that abortion is a serious moral issue and that the fetus is entitled to protection will affect our mores, the hearts and minds of our people, better than absolute prohibition. Glendon asks prochoice advocates in the United States to consider what a set of legal arrangements that places individual liberty above innocent life says about, and may do to, the people and the society that produces them.

Glendon proposes that abortion law be returned to the states, where she expects, rightly I think, bitter debate but eventual compromise. With divorce, Glendon proposes that the needs of minor children be made primary, under fixed requirements of support not subject to the discretion of judges.

Mary Ann Glendon has used a profound knowledge of comparative law to tell us that our society can be better served, if we have the courage and humility to learn from fellow nations. □



FROM ABBA TO WORSHIP

THE NEW DICTIONARY OF THEOLOGY
Edited by Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, OSB, Dermont Lane
Michael Glazier, $59.95, 1112 pp.

John H. Wright

This volume is the fruit of a collaborative effort of 167 theologians, liturgists, and biblical scholars to provide "an intelligent and critical introduction to Catholic theology in our day." Eighty percent of these writers live and work in the United States; the rest are found in eight other countries around the world: Ireland, Italy, Canada, England, India, Australia, Scotland, and Zambia. In its own way this book celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, putting into practice the directives of the council for the renewal of theology: a return to sources and a concern for contemporary needs.

The dictionary is built around twenty-four core articles (twenty-five to thirty columns each), treating themes the editors judged were most central to a Catholic understanding of faith. Four of these articles deal with the sources of theology: Revelation, Faith, the New Testament, and the Old Testament. Two are concerned with method: Theology and Biblical Theology. The remainder are directly substantive. There is one article on a central theme of biblical theology: the Reign of God. There are thirteen articles of systematic or doctrinal theology: God, Trinity, Holy Spirit, Creation, Christian Anthropology, Grace, Sin, Jesus Christ, Redemption, Church, Sacraments, Eucharist, and Eschatology. Finally, four deal with practical or pastoral theology: Love, Christian Moral Life, Liturgy, and Spirituality. All these articles provide short bibliographies for further study.

There are nearly 200 shorter articles which center around the core articles. They vary greatly in length, some nearly as long as the main articles, others a paragraph or two. Many of the shorter articles give additional bibliography, and nearly all give cross references to other articles.

This dictionary is neither as extensive as an encyclopedia of theology, nor as brief as some other theological dictionaries, like that of Rahner and Vorgrimler. It manifests in a striking way both the unity and the pluralism of current Catholic theology. There is unity in faith, in seeking the original meaning of Scripture, in respect for the Catholic tradition, and in a critical evaluation of the contemporary scene. There is pluralism in approach, in method, in the evaluation of some movements, and sometimes in understanding and conclusions. It is also ecumenically sensitive, drawing on the experience and insights of other Christian communities and of other world religions. It consistently avoids narrow polemicism, without becoming uncritical.

The authors have been extraordinarily successful in their concern to investigate the biblical roots of their topics, to trace the subsequent developments, and to offer an understanding that takes into account the contemporary social, cultural, religious, and scientific world. Many present creative insights of their own that advance the modern theological discussion. Naturally, with the large number of writers and articles, there is some unevenness in quality; but none of them fails to be rewarding. The volume is intended not just for experts, but for all involved in the work of theology: teachers at all levels, writers, preachers, and students. It should prove an invaluable source of theological enrichment for many years to come. □

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THROUGH THE EYE OF HISTORY

THE WARSAW GHETTO
A Christian's Testimony
Wladyslaw Bartoszewski
Beacon Press, $14.95, 115 pp.

Bogumil Kościesza

There was no ghetto in Warsaw in 1940 when nineteen-year-old Wladek Bartoszewski was arrested by the Nazis. When he returned from Auschwitz in early summer 1941, the city had been forcibly torn into three districts: German, Polish, and Jewish. His concentration camp (*lager*) "re-education" obviously had not taken; Bartoszewski, now code-named "Ludwik," immediately became one of the leaders of the Polish effort to save Jewry from extinction. The end of the war did not put a stop to Bartoszewski's efforts on behalf of the victims of the Nazi persecution. Through his writings and lectures, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski bore witness to the truth. *The Warsaw Ghetto* is part of that witness.

It is often said that eyewitnesses make bad historians. *The Warsaw Ghetto* proves that axiom false. Bartoszewski has no axe to grind, no personal guilt, real or imagined, to motivate and color his testimony. The book fully lives up to its original German title: *Das Warschauer Ghetto—wie es wirklich war* (as it really was).

This is a tightly written book. Much of it is a translation of contemporary Jewish, Polish, and Nazi documents interspersed with Bartoszewski's paragraphs providing continuity and putting the documentation in its historical context. The book is almost frighteningly matter-of-fact ("this was a time when there were as yet no gas chambers and mass executions—only 'normal' deaths from exhaustion").

Bartoszewski tells the story of the Warsaw Ghetto not in a vacuum, but against the background of Nazi-occupied Poland, a background of "indescribable conditions . . . amid the ragings of German terror that were also directed at the Christian Poles, while the blood of masses of executed Polish hostages was flowing in the streets every day" (Report of the Jewish National Committee, Warsaw, 1943). It is a story of an abyss within an abyss!

It is no surprise to someone who lived those events, that this perspective does not diminish but rather augments the horror of the ghetto.

The passage of years has created a mythology of the ghetto. Some of it is harmless. It may even serve to make the incomprehensible a little less so. There are, however, some myths that detract, that distort, that lie; Bartoszewski puts these to rest.

One such distortion is that the ghetto uprising was an act of desperation undertaken after everything else had failed. "The opposite was in fact true:" Bartoszewski writes, "the chief organizers and leaders of the uprising were people who could have easily saved their own lives, who had secure contacts with the Polish underground movement, and had a good chance of surviving the war among the Christian Polish population." He tells of a Jewish leader (Arie Wilner) who, after he was helped by the Poles to escape the Gestapo prison, refused an offer of refuge and returned to fight and to die in the ghetto.

> *Has our terrible experience taught us nothing? Will we still let ourselves be deluded by a kind word from one or another Nazi killer, from some Jewish Gestapo man, from hirelings or traitors? . . . Do not let yourselves be slaughtered! Prepare to defend your own lives!*
> *—Declaration of the Jewish Combat Association, Warsaw, 1942*

Bartoszewski quotes the decision by the Jewish combat organizations and the associated political branches to refuse the Polish underground's offer of asylum for the Jewish cultural, intellectual, political, and social leaders. "They decided that only children and those individuals who will be no use" in the armed struggle, because of reasons of health or age, should go.

Other myths are exploded indirectly; relating and documenting the facts, Bartoszewski discredits the lie. Demolished in this way is the fiction that Polish Jews received no financial aid from world Jewry. By the same means the book refutes the slander that the Catholic church in Poland stood idly by in the face of the genocide.

Of more than three million ethnic Poles murdered by the Nazis, some 200,000 died as a direct result of helping the Jews. Emanuel Ringelblum wrote that, in the autumn of 1943, tens of thousands of Jews were being hidden by the Poles in Warsaw alone. Ringelblum conservatively estimated that at least 60,000 people (of Warsaw's wartime Polish population of 700,000) had to be involved in providing this refuge. Bartoszewski's book clearly documents that the aid was massive, and not limited to the cities or to a particular social or political group. It thus gives the lie to the myth of "the exceptional few."

The Warsaw Ghetto is not an apologia; *A Christian's Testimony* is a testimony to the suffering of the Jews. The late Adolf Berman, an underground leader and later a Knesset member, wrote: "The time for the Great Golden Book of the Christian Poles who reached out a helping hand to the Jews and saved them from death during the terrible 'period of contempt' will come." *The Warsaw Ghetto* is not that book. But, like anything written honestly on the subject, it does provide a few pages toward it. And *The Warsaw Ghetto* is honest: it does not shirk from telling of criminals who aided the Nazis, be those criminals Polish or Jewish.

Bartoszewski is the author of eighteen books and of nearly 500 articles, and an indefatigable lecturer on the Shoah

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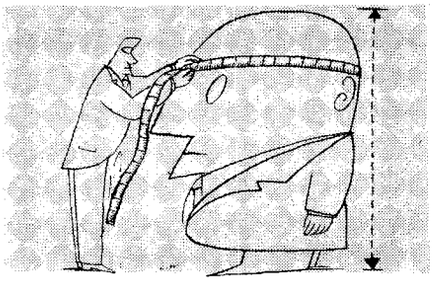
around the world. *The Warsaw Ghetto* was first written in German to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the ghetto uprising. The translation suffers from some minor problems. It is to be hoped they will be corrected in the next edition.

This year marks the forty-fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The present commemorative observances of the event and the constant focusing of attention on the cataclysms of Auschwitz and other extermination *lagers*, proper as they are, may tend to blur the consciousness of the perduring hell that was daily life in Nazi-occupied Poland. I specify Poland, because the situation there was unique and without parallel in the rest of Nazi-held Europe. It is perhaps natural to want to focus on the enormous. The impossibility of comprehending makes it easier to avoid discomforting identification with the victims, the perpetrators, or both. Thus the only good that could come from the evil of those events is lost. Bartoszewski's *The Warsaw Ghetto* is an effective antidote to complacency. □



MEASURING EFFECTS

PROPORTIONALISM
The American Debate and Its European Roots
Bernard Hoose
Georgetown University, $22.95, $10.95 paper, 159 pp.

James Gaffney

"Proportionalism" is a modern addition to the jargon of Roman Catholic moral theology, in whose recent literature it appears frequently and often confusingly. It has no comparable place in the working vocabulary of moral philosophers, or even of Christian ethicists generally. And indeed, the arguments Roman Catholic moral theologians conduct under this heading seem to a great extent oblivious of highly pertinent discussions about closely related questions pursued by others learned in religious and ethical matters. I accordingly opened Bernard Hoose's book with hopes of finding the Catholic debate presented in terms sufficiently exoteric to foster constructive relations with relevant aspects of a broader culture.

No such luck. It is a book whose idiom, purview, and allusions make it so hardly accessible to "outsiders," however enlightened about the underlying issues, that having done a stint of moral theology in a Catholic seminary seems almost indispensable for reading it with interest or ready comprehension. Convinced as I am that Catholic moral thought is retarded by habits of discussing matters of long-standing public interest in terms adhering to a very private cultural history, I was disappointed by this characteristic of Hoose's book.

What the author sets out to do is to chronicle, and in some respects to evaluate a series of positions in Catholic moral theology that has constituted a running controversy for more than twenty years. It began with some articles in European journals dealing with the moral assessment of actions in which good and evil seem perplexingly combined. And the perplexity is intensified as one begins to unwrap the ambiguities of "good and evil" in such a statement of the problem. It is precisely these ambiguities that account for much of the controversy's protractedness and inconclusiveness.

Despite its European origins, the controversy has thrived especially in the United States where, in recent years, "proportionalism," as a term of opprobrium applied by more conservative to more liberal moral theologians, has elicited from the latter a great number of explanatory and defensive statements, few of which appear to satisfy their critics.

The whole dispute is further complicated by actual and potential interventions by ecclesiastical authorities, and by the Catholic theological foible of cushioning the shock of innovation by swathing it in traditional terminology, diplomatically redefined. All of this makes for a controversial style that is at once ponderous and nervous, and extremely redundant: pretty awful stuff to read. Any reader whose interest in it is real but not heroic must be grateful to Hoose for getting the gist of it into one small paperback, and showing in the process that the controversy has dealt with important questions and generated useful ideas.

The basic issue that makes proportionalism controversial is old and familiar. It is reflected in the rhetorical question Paul attributed to defamers of his Christian community, "Why not do evil that good may come?" or the one later raised by critics of Jesuit casuistry, "Does the end justify the means?" From one point of view these may seem naive questions. If doing "evil that good may come" means merely doing or occasioning some harm that makes certain benefits possible for whoever willingly incurs the harm, the main moral question does seem to hinge on whether or not the benefits are worth it. Here a kind of proportionalism is normally taken for granted insofar as a reasonable excess of benefit over harm is frequently a basis for moral approval—as in accepting an amputation to arrest the spread of infection, or a tax to enhance public welfare.

No doubt there is a problem about measuring the proportion of harm to benefit when they belong to very different orders of value. And although most people seem to make such comparisons fairly confidently, even though lacking a

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methodical standard, some thinkers regard an incommensurability of values belonging to harms and benefits as fatal to the rationality of even quite ordinary proportionalism.

Unfortunately, a persistent confusion has burdened this controversy from the start. In the past it was widely held that behavior giving rise to bad effects as well as good ones might be ethically acceptable if the bad effects were "indirect" or "unintended." This led to two opposite modes of sophistry. On the right, opponents of proportionalism sometimes stretch the meaning of "indirect" and "unintended" far beyond the limits imposed by honest usage. While on the left, advocates of proportionalism sometimes confuse proportionality with the quite different criteria of indirectness or unintendedness.

A more significant controversy arises when proportionalism seems to involve the acceptance not simply of doing some harm to bring about greater good, but of doing something antecedently recognized to be wicked. Thus for a destitute mother to provide for dependent children by working so hard and long that she ruins her health, or for her to do so by constraining one of the children to offer services as a prostitute, would not normally be perceived as ethically parallel cases. For in the latter case the cost of the benefit is understood to entail not simply harm, damage, physical evil, but wickedness, sin, moral evil. The crucial underlying assumption is that there are some kinds of behavior that remain morally reprehensible irrespective of how much good results from them. At the same time, it would not be difficult to imagine circumstances so extreme and intimidating, that even a mother who drove her child into prostitution would be judged, not ethically right but, in view of her plight, morally blameless.

Apart from sheer historical information, perhaps the main value of reviewing the Roman Catholic "proportionalism" controversy, and therefore of reading Hoose's book, is to be reminded of the importance of distinguishing clearly among three orders of good and evil, one belonging to the realm of harm and benefit, one to the normative ethics of rightness and wrongness, and one to the subjective morality of guilt and innocence. Both proportionalists and their critics have often generated misunderstanding by confusing these orders, or by ignoring some of their combinations. One who keeps them in mind, if asked whether or not he or she is "a proportionalist," will not find it possible, I think, to give a quick answer. □

A PICTURE UNDEREXPOSED

WILLA CATHER
James Woodress
University of Nebraska, $35, 583 pp.

Margaret Wimsatt

The official biography of Willa Cather was largely written by Edward Killoran Brown of Toronto and Chicago, and finished after his death by Leon Edel. When it appeared in 1953 the publisher, Alfred Knopf, wrote as jacket copy: "Here is all the biographical information anyone is likely ever to gather about Willa Cather." (That book, in large type, ran to about 350 pages.)

Cather was a private person, and left instructions that none of her writings outside the official canon might be cited directly, and that as many as possible of them, especially letters, should be destroyed. Both Knopf and Edith Lewis, her friend and executor, did their best to carry out these instructions, but they overlooked hordes of juvenilia. Brown worked under difficulties; nevertheless, his biography remains the most sympathetic, the friendliest, yet to appear.

Nowadays there is a Cather cult centered in her childhood home, Red Cloud, Nebraska, and fostered by the excellent publications of her *alma mater* at Lincoln. Many people have worked hard to establish the facts of her life, and to recover early pieces in obscure journals of the period under many pseudonyms.

So it just might be safe by now to repeat Alfred Knopf's prediction. Perhaps this book is substantially canonical. James Woodress, who teaches at the University of California at Davis, is in a good position to undertake so large a work, having published, in 1970, a slimmer and more strictly critical volume, *Willa Cather: Her Life and Art*. He dedicates this one to "the community of Cather Scholars, past and present." It is a vast and busy fraternity, and Woodress has coherently consolidated years of paraphrasing, quotation being forbidden, from collections in libraries all over the country.

Readers with an interest in Cather will enjoy his accounts of her early journalism. She was a good reporter, and published miles of copy, both in college and while waiting for the job that eventually materialized in Pittsburgh. For instance, her account of a Chautauqua Festival in southwestern Nebraska's farming country. Or of a visit to the deserted town of Brownsville, abandoned when the perfidious Missouri River shifted its course. Here she found a falling-down gingerbread town, the final signal of despair indicated by the deserted saloon. These ephemera were set down with a blunt and fluent pen. Here as elsewhere Woodress acknowledges the basic digging in hard ground of such scholars as Beatrice Slote, James Shively, Mildred Bennett, and William Curtis, to which he has substantially added.

His method is one popular with writers of literary biography: periodic, with the biographical facts given first, followed by discussions in each chapter of the writing that appeared (or was written) within the period. It is an excellent way to be comprehensive, though duplication is hard to avoid; many facts enter twice. A more serious question, however, has not been tackled by Woodress, nor, to my knowledge, by anyone else. The

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coming together is the problem with Cather, the joining of technical skill to the broader vision. This eluded her until the publication of *My Antonia* when she was forty-five years old. Some of her earlier fiction shows talent; she early developed and never lost the ability to turn a phrase. Why did it take her so long to distill what she began soaking up very young? Writer's block it wasn't; for years she wrote copiously but not very well. All readers of and writers about Cather, including Professor Woodress, recognize this, but no one explains it.

Cather at her best is very, very good, a fact honored by such fellow writers as Sinclair Lewis, Katherine Mansfield, and Eudora Welty, and by the many "common readers" who have kept her best books continuously in print. It is for this reason that people speculate, and scholars dig out and publish the facts, not only of the composition of her work, but of her private life as well. She certainly would have hated the exposure, but—perhaps she was wrong. The information has not diminished her. And the good tales can still be found to move and please us: *O Pioneers!*, *A Lost Lady*, perhaps *Shadows on the Rock*, or *The Professor's House*. To be reminded of their existence helps to keep them in our minds, and for this refreshment, James Woodress deserves our thanks. □

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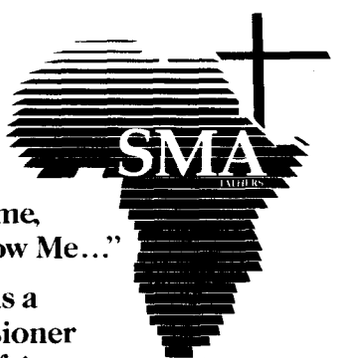

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IN BRIEF

KEEPING THE FAITH: AMERICAN CATHOLICISM PAST AND PRESENT, *by Philip Gleason, Notre Dame, $24.95, 320 pp.*

This collection of ten essays, written between the late 1960s and the mid-1980s, analyzes the travails and triumphs of the American Catholic experiment, past and present. Gleason writes from a scholarly perspective—he is professor of history at Notre Dame—but infuses each treatise with a sense of personal regard for the fate of the Catholic enterprise.

The essays range from the influence of what Gleason styles the "mythic" Middle Ages of the American Catholic mindset, to criticisms of contemporary historians in the field. The extensive footnotes indicate the book's genesis as well as its likely audience. A constant refrain in its various segments is Gleason's awareness of the "earthquake," "breakdown," "utter decomposition," and "psychic dislocation" experienced by American Catholics in the two decades following the Second Vatican Council. One cannot escape the author's own pain. Gleason's fine reflections on the achievement and the sudden demise of the Neo-Scholastic project remind one of Paul Hendrickson's stunning if more novelistic account in *Seminary*. Both authors indicate that foundations deserve special scrutiny.

Gleason avoids the easy cynicism of blaming others. He indicates that there has never been a more challenging moment for American Catholics than the present. He makes the effort to revitalize the faith seem not only demanding but ennobling. P.J.

REVIEWERS

DANIEL A. DEGNAN, S.J., *who teaches at Seton Hall University School of Law in Newark, New Jersey, where he was formerly dean, has written on abortion issues previously for* Commonweal.

JOHN H. WRIGHT, S.J., *is past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America and a member of the faculty of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley and the Graduate Theological Union. He is the author of* A Theology of Christian Prayer *(Glazier).*

BOGUMIL KOSCIEŚZA *is an essayist, editor, and translator. He was an eyewitness to many of the events recorded in the book under review, and some of his writings on the Shoah have appeared in* Commonweal.

JAMES GAFFNEY *is professor of ethics at Loyola University in New Orleans. His latest book,* Matters of Faith and Morals, *was recently published by Sheed and Ward.*

MARGARET WIMSATT *has frequently reviewed for* Commonweal. *She also teaches at Yale University and the University of New Mexico.*

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 450)

Words that bind

Rego Park, N.Y.

To the Editors: The late Marjorie Tuite, O.P., a social activist who spent her life helping oppressed people confront the causes of poverty—racism, sexism, and militarism—regularly expressed the need "to make the connections."

Francis DeBernardo, in his lucid analysis ["Engaging Words," June 3] of the effectiveness of *Economic Justice for All*, observes that the bishops, "in offering their tradition as compatible with, or not as competing against, secular values, use arguments of association, a common rhetorical vehicle."...The bishops clearly have made the connections, connections that bind them to their brothers and sisters everywhere, religious or not.

In their conclusion (#293, not cited in DeBernardo's article), the bishops insist, "None of the issues we have addressed in this chapter can be dealt with in isolation. They are interconnected and their resolution requires difficult tradeoffs among competing interests and values."

DeBernardo is on target in saying that

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the bishops' words "speak to a wide variety of people actively involved in the real world." He says their ability to do so is what makes this document "truly pastoral."

This heartening determination to fuse realism with the proclamation of the ideal is evident in their recent decision to retain a controversial statement in their document about AIDS. Allowing for education about the use of condoms, according to Bishop Anthony Pilla of Cleveland, is "pastorally effective."

The bishops' statements, Pilla argues, "must stand a test of realism in terms of being credible in a pluralistic atmosphere. We must address issues in a way that reflects our ability to grasp what is actually going on among people."

Again, that's making the connections.

CAMILLE D'ARIENZO, R.S.M.

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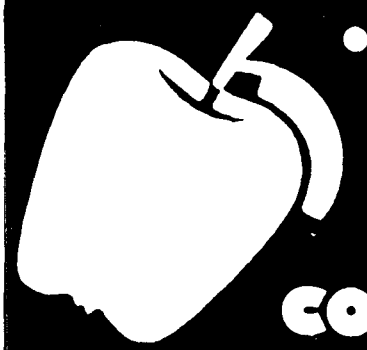

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Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)

Philosopher, editor of the scientific works of Goethe for the Kuerschner and Weimar editions, and leading exponent of the Western esoteric tradition left the world over 350 volumes of his complete works. He founded the Waldorf Schools, established the anthroposophical extension of medicine and biodynamic agriculture, inaugurated a unique school of architecture and inspired the Camphill Villages for special individuals. Free catalog of over 150 volumes. Anthroposophic Press, Suite 26, Star Route, Hudson, N.Y. 12534, (518) 851-2054.

Mt. Saint Mary's College Chaplain

Mount Saint Mary's College, a co-educational, Catholic liberal arts college of about 1400 students is seeking a Chaplain. The Chaplain should be a Roman Catholic priest with at least a Master's degree in Theology and successful pastoral experience. He must be committed to the Mission of the College and to the maintenance and development of the liturgical life and spiritual vitality of the College community in all its constituencies. In this task, the Chaplain will have available to him a broadly based Campus Ministry Council. Innovative programs in campus ministry dealing with prayer life, building community and service will be encouraged and supported. Mount Saint Mary's is located in rural Maryland, within easy driving distance of Baltimore, Washington, D.C. and Harrisburg. Starting date and salary negotiable. A three-year renewable commitment is preferred. Applicants should submit a letter of application, a detailed résumé, three letters of recommendation and official transcript to: Rev. James M. Forker, Chairman of the Search Committee, Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727. Application deadline: October 15, 1988.

Catholic Readers

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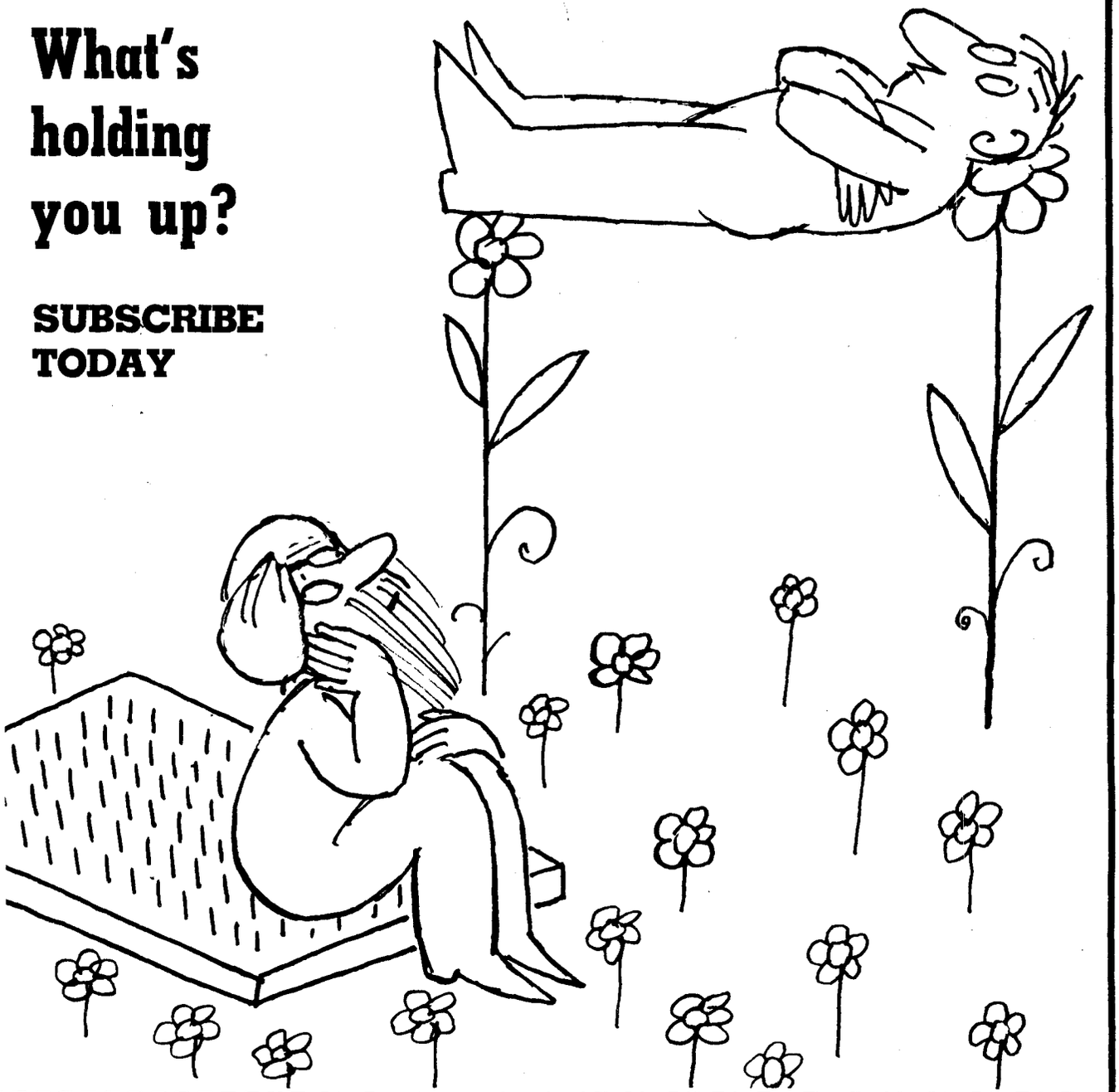

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